

ABERRANTTM

TERACTEAN



Marvels. Monsters. Portents.

CAUTERY

Deep within Allison, Shrapnel was screaming. She could swear the pint of Smithwick's in her hand was going to explode, so clear was the cymbal-crash of ripping metal ringing in her ears. She gulped down the rest of the ale, hoping it would silence her quantum self.

"Not much, as far as pubs go," Charles Ridgley said as he slid into the seat across from Allison. In three years, his smile hadn't changed at all. "Serves us right for taking a pint in Paris. Good to see you, luv."

The pub, The Wicker Man, was tucked into a corner of the *troisième arrondissement*, accessible down a steep staircase from Rue de Normandie. Its patrons were an odd mix of French anglophiles and tourists lucky enough to stumble upon its entrance and pay 40 francs for a pint of Newcastle, Guinness or Kilkenny. To some it was probably a charming bit of Éire. To Allison, who had grown up in Belfast and London, it was a bizarre hybrid, a cross between bad memories and a crass mockery. But it just wasn't safe across the Channel.

"Yeah, it's been a while." She felt awkward and alone, in a way she hadn't in many years. She barely recognized the timber of her own voice or the beat of her own heart. She was used to being Shrapnel, quantum and rage flowing through her like air and fuel through a jet engine. Now, she was dorm'd down for the first time since her Chrysalis. She was plain old Allison again, and Shrapnel was fighting to get out. But she needed to do it this way. To be sure.

"Well, I can't be held accountable for not seeing you, luv. You walked out of the Farmhouse on your own."

"I bloody hate that name, Charlie. You take novas and turn them into walking atom bombs for Queen and Country. Some Farmhouse."

"Better for the Queen than for some maniac...."

The vigor went out of Charlie's voice as quickly as it had entered, and his patented trust-me smile came back with a vengeance. "I didn't come here to debate politics with you, Allison. You asked me here as a friend, and that's how I came. No wire, no tails, and no word to the boss."

"No gun?"

"Allison, I'm a sentimentalist, not an idiot. Why did you want to meet?" He signaled a waiter for a pint, but the dubiously Irish man barely reacted.

"I just wanted to see you. To know how you were and, well, to remember for a while." She tried to smile, but the unfamiliar fleshy skin of her face wouldn't cooperate. It came out a smirk. "For old times."

"I've thought about you a lot, Allison. The bosses keep me off cases that might link to you, but I hear stories. Shrapnel of the Teragen, wanted terrorist. Hell, I even cheer you on sometimes. If you can stick it to those Utopia twits, more power to you."

Shrapnel raged at the mention of her name, burning a pulsing ache into Allison's skull. She winced before recovering. "You always had a bizarre take on loyalty, Charlie. But I suppose I can't talk, seeing as I'm drinking with a baseline and all."

"Guess not. I never betrayed my people, though. I stood by you when the brigadier wanted you to take out those boys in Ghana." His hand reached over to hers. "I was always loyal to you."

Allison's heart jumped at the contact. His hand was warm and supple. The simple flesh-on-flesh contact sent shivers down her spine. It was so *human*. The headache promoted itself to a migraine, and she withdrew her hand. "Yeah, Ghana was quite the little party," she said.

They continued like that for an hour. Talking about old times and never quite coming around to their feelings. They went through a half-dozen old missions, talking about the comedic and deadly quirks of the covert operations business, about other elites she had faced, about dodging Project Utopia and about others trained at the Farmhouse. But not once did she say how much this *monkey* had meant to her, how much he continued to mean to her.

Oh, she laughed at his jokes, and he did at hers. They were almost in tears howling about an Indian intelligence officer in Kashmir and his attempts to seduce her. But whenever the topic came back to the present, things went sour.

"You must have quite the tales to tell about the last few years," he said sometime after his fifth pint. "Even the Teragen have their cock-ups, I'll bet."

She swallowed hard, Shrapnel pushing hard to get out of Allison. "What are you trying to say, Charlie? You know anything about us? Anything at all?" She barely realized she was hoarse and yelling.

"Ease off, luv. Just a comment."

"Well keep your bloody comments to yourself! Bloody—" She caught herself, but not quite in time.

"What? Bloody *what*?" He was angry and stone-cold sober now. The reminiscing was over. "Bloody baseline?"

She was going to say "monkey," but she let it pass. "This was a mistake. I hoped we could talk one last time...."

"Talk about what, Allison? About how I took a scared little Paddy girl out of Belfast and taught her what she could do? About how you spat in my bloody face and took up with the enemy? How about we talk about that for a while?"

"It wasn't you, Charlie." She swallowed and looked into his burning eyes. "That's all I wanted to say. I did what I did because of who... no, because of *what* I am. You were good to me Charlie, and I never wanted to hurt you. I just wanted you to know...."

"Piss off Allison! It's too bloody late for that tripe! You chose your side, live with it!" And, with that, he was gone.

Part of her was relieved. It would make it easier.

He was crossing the Pont Neuf when she caught up to him 20 minutes later. She was sure it was Charlie, that long stride was unmistakable. She looked within, concentrated on the hot knife stabbing into her frontal lobes and gave in.

Quantum exploded from her node like a small hydrogen bomb, burning away her baseline flesh and replacing it with fiery light. Her skin warped and cracked into crazed and jagged metal; light refracted around her from the heat, and her feet left the ground. Allison was gone and Shrapnel was back. She was nova. She was Terat. And she needed to be free.

"Goodbye, Charlie," she said in her new voice. She raised her hand and quantum pulsed, sending a stream of hot metal shards streaming down the bridge. It hit like a burst of machinegun fire, cutting Charlie to ribbons. He tried to scream, but nothing emerged above the sound of tortured metal.

"And goodbye, Allison." Shrapnel was ready for the revolution at last.



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Teragen.

To be a nova is to have infinite potential, the power to move mountains and part the seas. The biblical reference is not inappropriate; in 2008, novas are the closest thing humanity has to living gods. They arrived as the world paused at the brink of a new millennium — pollution was rampant, wars raged in every corner of the globe and suffering was universal. In a fiery display of pyrotechnics, the *Galatea* changed everything. Uncertainty and fear melted away, and humanity latched onto their new heroes and expected, even demanded, miracles from them. In a whirlwind of events — the arrival of Project Utopia, the Zurich Accord, the miracle-cures of the Triton Foundation and the political maneuvers of the enigmatic Aeon Society — novas around the planet stopped leading the way and let baselines control them. Brainwashed novas believed it was their duty to die as elites in Africa, to fight criminals and megasyndicates and to find cures to diseases. They never asked why....

But there were those who stood up and took notice. They saw their potential shackled and stripped by paranoid baseline organizations the world over. These visionaries tired of seeing their nova siblings become freaks and commodities in the eyes of the very people they were saving.

From this, the Teragen evolved.

What Is the Teragen

Freaks, radicals, malcontents, the members of the Teragen are all this and more. No two novas who call themselves Terat are identical, however, and such blanket statements can only hint at the truth. After all, in the world of 2008, few issues are so clear-cut.

First, what the Teragen are not. They are not some sort of super-villain organization bunkered away in a secret base, itching to fight Team Tomorrow and get humiliated once again. Governments and the media like to paint the Teragen as an organized terrorist movement — fanatics and nova-supremacists who are a danger to all, baseline and nova alike. Some Terats do fit this bill, but this is only part of the picture, the part baselines see.

The truth is that the Teragen is more like a family, if a dysfunctional one. They gather not because they are out to conquer the world — though some are — but because they acknowledge and accept their status as more than human, as the “One Race,” to use their own terminology. Divis Mal issued *The Null Manifesto* and proclaimed novas distinct from baselines, but it was a sentiment already whispered by many. Mal just gave it a voice, one that struck a chord in all novas — whether they praised or condemned it. The manifesto shocked and enraged some. In others, it awakened a thirst for violence and power. But some saw it as a rallying call to defend novas from baseline exploitation. To the Teragen, the manifesto was the sign that its time had come at last.

The Teragen is a revolutionary movement. Terats no longer consider themselves human and believe that they are fighting for the rights, if not the very survival, of the nova species. While baselines have yet to start a pogrom against novas, the Teragen understands that it's only a matter of time. Several members believe such a pogrom is already happening just beyond the view of the public eye. Since the very emergence of novas, baselines across the globe have tried to control and limit nova influence and power. Baselines have come to believe that they can expect servitude from novas, and the Teragen believes the time has come to disabuse them of this notion.

Freaks, radicals, malcontents, Terats are more than this. But it's as good a place to start as any.

Understanding Teras

To understand the Teragen one must first understand Teras, its philosophy. It is the one element that binds the Teragen together, gives it purpose and direction and makes it a unified group. To the Teragen, there is no disputing the fact that novas are not human. Eruption and quantum development are ongoing evolutionary processes; the transition from baseline to nova is a journey most are only beginning. To guide them, the Teragen developed a philosophy, the principal of Teras, which asserts that all novas contain three archetypes: Marvel, Monster and Portent. By living and becoming one of these concepts, a nova gains a better understanding of who she is, and more importantly, *what* she can become.

The Marvel

Novas are beings of utmost power and potential, but many baselines are unwilling or unable to accept novas for what they really are — living gods. To be a Marvel is to accept and believe that one is not only more than human, but also more than mortal and mundane. With this realization comes a renewed comprehension of eruption and a thirst for power. To Marvels, the whole world is their oyster.

The Monster

Being a Terat means understanding that life as a nova is a process, a transformation. To achieve one's true destiny, it is necessary to destroy what makes one human — for only by divorcing herself from human limitations (including morals and ethics) can a nova emerge changed.

The Portent

Terats who embrace the Portent leave behind their baseline fetters, their fears and limitations and embrace raw potential and possibility. They are the ultimate visionaries, freed from human frailty and weakness; they can stare into the abyss of the future, knowing that within them lie all the answers they seek.

How to Use this Book

Aberrant: *Teragen* gives you and your players insight into the mysterious Teragen for use in an **Aberrant** series, whether as antagonists or characters. It presents all the necessary information, though it does not flesh out every single detail. This gives you the freedom to tailor the Teragen to best suit your players, style of play and series. You could use Terats as straight “bad guys,” but in the world of **Aberrant**, things are always more complicated than that. It is equally possible to play a series wherein the Teragen are the heroes, defending novas from manipulation by the baseline masses. Regardless of how you use the Teragen, the movement presents you with countless ways to make your series richer and more dramatic.

Breakdown

Words of the One Race, the first section of this book, lets you see the Teragen in action; it's a chance to view the world of **Aberrant** through Terat eyes, shedding some light on the goals, conflicts and key personalities of the movement.

Chapter One: Inside the Teragen delves deeper into the inner workings of the Teragen. Just who is really pulling the strings? What is Divis Mal's role? And what is to come? Chapter One also presents the Teragen enclave of Blackburn as a starting point for a Teragen series.

Chapter Two: Storytelling helps you integrate the Teragen into the **Aberrant** storyline and shows you how to set up and run a Teragen series. It also provides a detailed outline of the Night of Long Knives, an epic story arc that impacts the future and evolution of the Teragen.

Chapter Three: Beneath the Monster's Skin looks into the mysterious rituals the Teragen use to control Taint and outlines new quantum abilities available to the Teragen. Chapter Three also details Terat character creation.

Appendix: Sample Characters concludes the book with several Teragen archetypes, useful as on-the-fly “villains” or as examples of “typical” Teragen characters.

Teragen Jive

cell: A small cadre of Terats (the player team in most series)

Chrysalis: A transformative stage that novas can enter in order to further their evolution and deal with Taint.

enclave: A Teragen safehouse where any and all Terats are welcome.

monkeys: Derogatory term for *Homo sapiens sapiens*.

movement, the: A euphemism for the Teragen.

One Race, the: Teragen supremacist terminology for *Homo sapiens novus* (novas). Sometimes “The First Race” or “The Prime Race.”

Pantheon, the: The loose group of prominent Terats that guides the movement.

stage: According to Teras belief, novas constantly evolve and can rise to higher evolutionary rungs. “Normal” novas are in the first stage; those who have gone through a Chrysalis are in the second stage; those who have undergone the Chrysalis twice are in the third stage.

Teragen: The movement centered on *The Null Manifesto*, Divis Mal and the philosophy of Teras. It means “carrier of Teras.”

Teras: The philosophy of the Teragen. It proposes the three concepts of Marvel, Monster and Portent to encompass all aspects of novas and their evolution.

Terat: A member of the Teragen.

Upies: Slang for the lackeys of Project Utopia; pronounced “you-pees.”

zip: Another derogatory term for *Homo sapiens sapiens*.



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N! Sight with Parker
Stevenson, N! Network,
March 25, 2008

Welcome to the Revolution

• **Voice-Over:** Live from Ibiza, Spain, N! is proud to present the world's most popular interview program, N! Sight, with your host Parker Stevenson!
[applause]

• **Stevenson:** Thank you! Thank you everyone, and welcome to the show. This week we're coming to you straight from the beach in sunny Ibiza. The salty Mediterranean air is full of sun and fun. As you all know, this is one of great nova hot spots, and we're thrilled to bring you here, live!

My special guest tonight is famous — or should I say infamous? — the world over. You've seen him here on N! and on magazine covers for years, watched him on safari in Africa and wondered in your hearts why a man who has it all has become the public face of the murderous Teragen. Ladies and gentlemen, Count Raoul Orzaiz!

[mixture of applause, cheers and jeers]

• **Orzaiz:** Good evening, Parker. Thank you so much for having me. I must say, you're quite gracious to have a scandal-ridden rogue such as I on your program.

• **S:** Why thank you, count. You're being much too hard on yourself, but you won't distract me that easily. We're here to talk about you and your connections to the Teragen.

• **O:** Yes, of course. I'm glad to be here to discuss matters with you.

• **S:** Let's start with that question I asked in the intro, shall we? Why do you support the Teragen?

• **O:** Because of who and what I am, Parker.

• **S:** You're the heir to one of Europe's greatest fortunes and the darling of the club scene. That hardly seems to qualify you for terrorism.

• **O:** I'm not a terrorist, Parker. The only blood on these hands comes from irate husbands with broken noses.

[audience laughter]

• **O:** I am *Homo sapiens novus*, however, and it is my understanding of this fact that has led me to be a spokesman for my species.

• **S:** Species, count? Novas may be extraordinary, but they are human. The UN agreed to that a decade ago.

• **O:** The United Nations might well declare that this chair I am sitting on is a rare breed of hummingbird, Parker, but that will not make it so. Novas have evolved from humanity and so we share many commonalties, but that doesn't make us the same. We have staggering abilities that few humans can even begin to understand. Our perspective is simply different.

• **S:** It sounds to me like you're talking about novas being superior to baselines.

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• **O:** You didn't hear me couch the issue in those terms, Parker, precisely because superiority isn't the issue. We have taken an evolutionary step, quite literally a quantum leap forward, and we must search out what our new status is. When humans evolved from apes, they became distinct. None of your accomplishments would have been possible, had they remained within the social system of the apes. I would hate to imagine you picking insects out of another person's hair simply because that's what your genetic ancestors had done.

• **S:** Yuck!

[audience laughter]

• **O:** Yes, indeed. Well, for novas, it's the same thing. We've just arrived, and we still live within a human society custom-made for human comfort. The Teragen comprises those novas courageous enough to declare that we must establish our own culture, determine our own fates and find our own place in the world.

• **S:** But what about the violence? Over the last 12 months we've all seen a rash of murders and attacks by the Teragen. Project Utopia and several world governments have called you the greatest threat to global prosperity.

• **O:** Declarations such as those are the products of fear. I would hardly qualify the last 12 months as a rash of violence, certainly not compared to the continued bloodshed in Kashmir and other global hot spots. Of course, novas are dying in Kashmir instead of humans, so the media seems much more ready to accept that. Ask the enemies of Project Utopia about the rash of violence, Parker, and I suspect you'll discover that their body count exceeds ours by orders of magnitude.

• **S:** What about Geryon and his "Nova Vigilance" group? They killed Fred Rupert and attacked the UN itself. They claim to be Teragen, just like you. And we've all just learned that the Teragen has been linked to the murder of T2M's Slider. How many deaths will it take to achieve your goals?

• **O:** Parker, allow me to state quite clearly that the Teragen had nothing to do with the death of Jennifer Landers. We are, however, quite interested in finding out who did, if for no other reason than to clear our name. Now, regarding your other question, novas who take their identity seri-



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ously cannot sit back and watch their own people threatened, cajoled or killed. This is still a baseline world, with baseline governments, who appoint baseline judges. Men like Mayor Rupert, or even Minister Chigwedere of South Africa, pose an active and ongoing threat to novas. They encourage their followers to hate us, fear us and even kill us. *Homo sapiens sapiens* has decided that we make lovely tools and even finer media stars, but it wants to keep us at the level of second-class citizens. Some baselines are willing to pursue legislation to that effect. Does it really surprise anyone that some of us felt compelled to respond?

• **S:** But surely Project Utopia and Team Tomorrow are enough to protect the very few novas who suffer legitimate oppression.

• **O:** Ah, but who watches the Utopians? I'm sure you've seen this morning's *Washington Post*, Parker. It has a very interesting exposé on the inner workings of Utopia and its less-than-humane practices. But even more seriously, I, myself, have seen evidence suggesting that the late Jennifer Landers was a victim of Utopia's baseline agenda. It's clear to me that Utopia is an organization designed primarily to protect baseline interests.

• **S:** How so?

• **O:** Utopia is a product of the Aeon Society, which gained status in the United Nations by promising to deal with the so-called nova crisis. The nova crisis, Parker. At its very inception, Utopia designated us as a problem to which it was the final solution. Ever since then, Utopia and its allies have used novas to resolve every baseline problem under the sun. Environmental depletion, AIDS, cancer, economic instability, petty dictators — Utopia has tackled them all with nova resources, keeping baseline governments content and the nova crisis under control.

• **S:** Surely those are universal concerns, affecting baseline and nova alike?

• **O:** In as much as novas continue to be appalled by how baselines treat one another and the world they inhabit, yes. But novas didn't pollute the oceans or destroy the jungles, now did we? We didn't wage wars on our neighbors and commit genocide time and time again. We don't have millennia of bloodshed upon which to build a "civilization."

We are new and different, and it is up to us to define ourselves. If we continue to serve humanity as executors of their will, we unavoidably become the instruments of still more bloodshed and terror. It is happening even now, is it not, with the establishment of businesses like the DeVries Agency. Only by finding our own destiny, can we ever hope to avoid those mistakes.

• **S:** But the United Nations has clearly stated that novas are part of the human community and cannot act separately from it.

• **O:** A violation of their own charter, Parker, which guarantees the right to self-determination. At the very least, we demand that novas be allowed to exercise that right.

• **S:** And if Utopia and the rest of us refuse?

• **O:** Then we will have no choice but to resist, in whatever ways we are able.

Dissent and Differences

Private letter from Teragen member Allison "Shrapnel" Hughes to fellow Terat Barry "The Confederate" Meldrum:

Barry,

Did you catch Orzaiz on NI? What a bloody flake! He spends so much time sleeping with baselines that he's lost track of the damn reason we're in this. He had the whole world watching and instead of a wake-up call, he gave them a few facile answers while he tried to suck up to that smarmy zip Stevenson. Bloody Spaniards, always pandering to the glamour machine.

All this to say that I think you're right. We need to kick the rest of the boys into high gear. Enough sitting around watching the grass grow, are we revolutionaries or not? Orzaiz said he wanted to meet, and Scripture and the Mathematician seem to agree. Well fine, but after that, I say we take to the streets. You've told me before that you're sick of seeing baselines around you, and I'm getting to feel the same. A few less monkeys in the world will do us all some good.

Say, why not start with little Miss Parker Stevenson herself? That little remora has gotten rich off novas for too long. Hell, I'll even ice him myself, live on OpNet.

Ruining Raoul's PR machine will just be my little bonus.

— Shrapnel

Tainted

Triton Foundation Internal Memorandum

Re: Taint (and Teragen)

From: Dr. Farah Rashoud

To: Ryan Gill, CEO

Ryan,

Our research into the etiology of nova aberration (what the media call "the taint") in Bahrain continues to prove largely fruitless. I could be wrong, but it seems that the more some novas use their quantum abilities, the more damage the quantum does to their bodies. Henri and I originally thought that node growth could cause serious psychological problems because of pressure on surrounding brain tissues, but this doesn't account for the remarkable variety of physical deformities we have catalogued. Novas who show a tendency to build up "taint" generally grow progressively more varied, morphologically speaking, except in cases involving the Teragen.

You may discount this separatist movement as nothing but self-inflated radicals, Ryan, but I believe they have insights into nova physiology that we lack, despite our extensive research. The intellectual capacities of *Homo sapiens novus* must not be underestimated. Our friends in the UN tell me that T2M Europe has repeatedly clashed with a monstrous group claiming Teragen allegiance. Despite notable aberrations, they seem rational, if rebellious.

My most powerful piece of evidence, however, is the only known Teragen member we now have under observation in Bahrain (since the recent escape of Sluice). Subject 2004-78/54F (whom we know as Caroline only thanks to the anonymous tip that revealed her location) has been here for nearly four years and has spent the entire time in a sort of quantum-charged coma. Her body bears signs of massive aberrations, but they are in a constant state of slow flux under a thin sheath of fibrous material that resembles a cocoon. Brainwave activity is erratic, varying between alpha and delta waves. Technically, she's just in a very deep sleep, but there seems to be a lot going on that we can't perceive. No degree of stimulation — even repeated exploratory surgery without anaesthetic — has roused her. I know she must be the key, but without more data, I can't take my research any further.

I'd like to encourage Utopia to step up efforts to capture more Teragen members, if possible. Interrogation and more direct research methodologies should give us the data we need to understand Caroline.

Sincerely,

Farah Rashoud, M.D., Ph.D.

Toward a New History

From the first of two essays circulating among Teragen members, mid 2008

My name is Pedro Santiago. My name is also The Mathematician, and I am a nova. More than that I am a Terat, a combatant in the struggle to define what it means to be beyond baseline humanity and to guarantee ourselves a future.

But the future is founded on the past. If we are to go forward, we must know our origins, victories and defeats. This document is the first step toward that understanding. The Teragen is on the verge of a great transformation, and I fear we will spiral into chaos if we fail to build on the past. I have assembled my recollections of the events that shaped our early days into the following essay, but I invite you all to add your own notes and contributions. I leave more recent events to one much younger than myself.

For the One Race.

Comment appended to file

You want feedback, geezbag?

This whole idea sucks! We're novas! We're the Teragen, you withered old fart. The past is dead, and the future is one big node-blowing party!

Divis and conquer, baby!

— Boom-Boom Harmon, Pandaimonion and proud of it

Oppression and Servitude

The detonation of the *Galatea* in 1998 may have ushered in the so-called "Nova Age," but the seeds of our current problems were all present before that fateful day. Save for the few children we keep hidden from Utopian pawns, we were all born before the *Galatea* fell from the sky. We are all children of the sick, dirty and self-destructive world of the late 20th century. The coming of novas, free and powerful by our very nature, terrified that world and its greedy, petty leaders. Thanks to the manipulations of the "philanthropic" Aeon Society, this fear fueled oppression. The Aeon Society rolled out Project Utopia with blinding speed, an efficiency that speaks of premeditation. Under its guidance, the ineffective and morose United Nations was suddenly able to act decisively. This is when our bondage truly began.



Estimated Power Levels:

Strength: 2
Intellect: 9
Speed: 3
Offense: 4
Defense: 5
Versatility: 7

The Mathematician

Birth Name: Pedro Santiago

Date of Birth: Unknown

Place of Origin: Santiago, Chile

Occupation: Chief shareholder of CORE International

Archetype: Portent (third stage)

Powers: The Mathematician perceives the entire world as a stream of numbers, equations and probabilities. This allows him a kind of clairvoyance, an ability to see trends coming well in advance, and makes him an organizational and financial genius. His own actions, however, cause disruptions in the flow of probabilities, often making him act cautiously lest he blind himself to other dangers. He can easily see attacks coming and perceive weaknesses in others. Physically, his frail form is constantly surrounded by a flow of phantasmal numbers conjured out of quantum energy, and his eyes and ears have vanished. His understanding of probabilities compensates for his missing senses.

Background: Pedro Santiago claims to have had dealings with Divis Mal before the Teragen came to-

gether, and some claim he erupted long before the *Galatea* lit up the night sky. In 1999, he helped organize the first meetings of the Teragen, and his corporate empire, centered on CORE International, continues to be the movement's major source of funding. Santiago's critics say he is overly conservative and that he opposed the Teragen's move into the public arena after the release of *The Null Manifesto*. In fact, Santiago's understanding of global trends have shown him that a bloody war between nova and baseline is coming, and he simply wishes the Teragen to be ready for the conflict. The spiritual understanding of eruption and taint offered up by Scripture strikes him as a potentially disastrous waste of time. When Divis Mal temporarily withdrew from the Teragen in 2006, Santiago saw this as the opportunity to move against the spiritualists. Over the last two years, he has supported all those with even vaguely political goals. Unfortunately, this activity has blinded him to the repercussions of supporting radicals like the Primacy and Harvesters, groups who are likely to hasten the conflict with baselines.

Baselines and duped novas look on June 30, 1998 as a grand day. On that date, the United Nations passed the Zurich Accord, reducing us to the status of baseline humanity with the stroke of a pen. It was ludicrously optimistic of them. According to the propaganda, the accord was for the good of all novas and would prevent our exploitation, as though we couldn't see to that ourselves. Parroting the fiction that the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights had been effective in protecting baselines, they claimed it would also protect us. The pathetic truth is that most novas believed them. It has taken a decade for even a small minority to wake up.

The years immediately following the Zurich Accord made clear that its true intent was simply to put novas to work for the betterment of baselines everywhere. Project Utopia and its popinjays in Team Tomorrow became the pretty face of servitude, using novas to undo the baselines' stupid ecological mistakes. Turning us into glorified workhorses, Utopia cleaned the oceans, fought disease and deposed dictators. They reduced a new leap forward in evolution to a universal solvent for global cleanup. Even the economic collapse of the Moscow Crash, the climax to almost a century of baseline ignorance and corruption, reversed itself only thanks to nova intervention.

Meanwhile, still under the aegis of Zurich, world governments put novas to work dealing with all sorts of unpleasantness. The Equatorial Wars introduced the use of elites, novas fighting and dying for baseline governments. Project Utopia and several world governments even had the temerity to introduce a new philosophy of armed conflict, wars fought by novas for the sake of reducing casualties. Zurich told us we were no different than humans, yet it was "humanitarian" to send us to the slaughter instead of baselines. With every year, the world became better for baselines, and more and more novas died on battlefields. It's probably the most clever ploy ever conceived by baselines, and we're the worse for it.

Comment appended to file

You refer to the reversal of the Moscow Crash as evidence of nova oppression, but that reversal was due to the actions of Vladimir Sierka, a nova who rose to power in Russia and still runs the Confederation to this day. According to your analysis, is he a victim or, even more ludicrously, an instrument of oppression?

I find it hard to believe that a nova now leading a global power through a renaissance can be a victim. I would argue that he shows us the potential of using baseline-created chaos to our advantage. Certainly, Utopia has achieved its status by solving baseline problems, I see no reason why we cannot do the same for our own ends.

— Natalya "Swarm Queen" Dornova, Terat and Primacy member

Comment appended to file

Dear Pedro,

As usual, you underestimate the importance of personal understanding and spiritual belief in the course of history. Do you not remember that the *Galatea* ushered in not only political machinations, but also an explosion in religious fervor? The major world faiths, those tied to the power structures oppressing us, reinforced and expanded the Zurich Accord, telling us that God Himself looked upon us as nothing special. Only those faiths not bound by stifling political structures recognized the spark of divinity within us. The baselines have spent much time portraying those enlightened few as mad cultists, at least as much as they have spent creating political strictures on our freedom.

When will you accept that not all things can be solved in a board room?

Be Well,

— Scripture

A Movement is Born

There were those among us, thankfully, who refused to be duped. Eschewing the obvious brainwashing inherent in Utopia's Rashoud facilities when invited to participate, or simply self-aware enough not to subject ourselves to the oppressor's clutches in the first place, we lived free, and eventually, we gathered.

In the summer of 1999, I met with a young nova named Raoul Orzaiz at his home — one of them anyway — in Spain. Raoul had made quite a splash in the European press by vociferously declining to enter a Rashoud facility after his eruption, and I surmised that he might feel as I did. We talked late into the night about the possibility of a new way for novas, about the need to regain the initiative Aeon had stolen from us all and about the interests of those who had already approached Raoul. We agreed that a gathering was in order.

A Gathering of Equals

Using the corporate resources at my disposal in conjunction with my unique abilities, I ensured that those we invited were neither Aeon spies nor dupes likely to run to Utopia at the first opportunity. We were a small group that September, when we gathered in Santiago de Chile. Besides Raoul and myself, there was only a French nova named Marcel Delorimier and a Chinese woman named Caroline Fong. Together we formed the core of our movement.

We began a series of discussions aimed at defining just what we are as novas, and what our future would be. Some spoke of outright superiority to baselines, others of distinction from them. Caroline spoke of novas liberating themselves from the mental chains of baseline belief, while Raoul spoke of ensuring a future through resources and plans. It took us three full days to exhaust our need for debate. We had made progress, and all enjoyed speaking with others who could understand us; we agreed both to meet again and to expand our circle.



We met every few months for the next several years, creating the foundation of our movement, and our circle grew to a dozen. Doctor Altaz Zia arrived in 2001, bringing with him a new and powerful understanding of the physical transformations brought about by quantum power. Others, such as Geryon and the former elite Shrapnel, brought the passion of the oppressed and a desire for justice.

Comment appended to file

Santiago:

You grievously underestimate the role of Divis Mal in all our destinies. Although I should no longer be surprised by your utter lack of understanding about his influence on us all, to think that our movement came together by coincidence is a monumental disrespect. Mal was the first. He was there all along, guiding us from afar and waiting for us to reach the right conclusions before stepping forward. We were not defining new territory in those early years, Santiago, we were simply proving ourselves worthy of his vision.

— Marcel Delorimier, The Apostle of Mal

The Arrival of Divis Mal

In 2003, the arrival of Divis Mal transformed our small movement. This incomprehensibly powerful nova and I had met once before, and I was grateful to have him among our number. With him came Jeremiah Scripture, his lifelong companion, along with several other novas. Our movement grew not only in numbers, but also in philosophical drive.

The greatest legacy of this time was the development of Teras, our core philosophy. Scripture struck the term, but it was Caroline who synthesized all our discussions into this universal outlook. Using an ancient Greek word, she encapsulated all things nova. We were at once the Marvels of the day, Portents of tomorrow and Monsters of the baselines' nightmares. By embracing all three aspects, we could guide ourselves into the future. Teras did not dictate what to do with ourselves, but it provided an understanding of what we were. Our drive forward would soon follow.

Mal added a singularity of vision and the conviction that we could thrive by creating a whole new community, complete with its own culture and achievements, by shedding our baseline roots. Indeed, it was Mal and Scripture who had shown me the transforming ways of Chrysalis, and they brought this revolutionary knowledge to the Teragen roundtable. Caroline integrated the Chrysalis into Teras philosophy and unlocked new ways for us to understand our continuing evolution. By studying what baselines have come to call taint,



Estimated Power Levels:

Strength: 3

Speed: 4

Offense: 5

Defense: 6

Versatility: 9

Caroline Fong

Birth Name: Fong Xia (name Westernized during stay in Britain)

Date of Birth: December 12, 1976

Place of Origin: British dependency of Hong Kong

Occupation: Business consultant, philosopher

Archetype: Portent (in Chrysalis)

Powers: Fong can channel quantum energy into devastating Quantum Bolts. Though she prefers not to enter combat at all, relying on her remarkable intellect and intuition to keep her out of harm's way instead.

Background: Born in Hong Kong but raised in Great Britain, Caroline Fong erupted in her native land after its return to mainland China. By that time an Oxford-educated philosopher, she was also a business consultant of some reputation. After her eruption, she found that she could sense and channel the ambient energy in whole new ways, internalizing and augmenting it. This showed her that novas were not the aberrations some claimed. If anything, she was now more in tune with the natural harmony of the world. She also understood that taint was only

one reflection of this energy, one that could surely be channeled. When Raoul Orzaiz's public refusal to enter a facility made the world press, she sought him out and became a founding member of the Teragen roundtable. There, she and Scripture formulated the philosophy of Teras and merged it with the understanding of the Chrysalis. In 2004, she entered the Chrysalis, but several months into her long transformation, T2M Europe member Saxon burst into her home. He brought her tainted form to the newly opened Bahrain facility, from which she has yet to emerge.

and by embracing our balance of Marvel, Monster and Portent, we could catalyze a new eruption and evolve even further. This process required a period of dormancy and was not without its risks, but the potential it unleashed was fantastic. Doctor Zia took to this lesson to heart. While his entourage of distinctly inhuman Harvesters embraced their monstrous forms as their own salvation, he strove to make the Chrysalis shorter and more reliable.

Many of us underwent the Chrysalis at this time. Marcel and Caroline each in turn dipped into the taint in order to emerge transformed. Scripture and I supervised their metamorphoses and gasped at the beauty of new companions in the second stage. But the Chrysalis is never a sure or easy thing, and the baseline fear of utter transformation still plagues us, nova or not. Marcel emerged successfully, but Caroline's dormancy was very prolonged, extending through most of 2004. I remember we took shifts, Scripture, Marcel (who had adopted The Apostle moniker by then) and I. It was under Marcel's watch that our enemies struck.

Caroline entered Chrysalis in her home in Bath, and we all thought it safe. But on October 1st, while Scripture and I were away, the baseline lapdogs of Team Tomorrow Europe flew out of sky and attacked. The Apostle had to flee for his life, seeing his mentor and love murdered by our most hated enemies. We had suffered our first great loss.

Comment appended to file

Mathematician:

Ignore Delorimier. He is a pathetic sycophant, kissing Mal's ass so he can feel important. We all played a part in becoming what we are, and his spinelessness sickens me to the core. Caroline was taken on his watch, and no amount of exalting Mal will make us forget that.

— Altaz Zia, The Apothecary of the Harvesters

The Null Manifesto

Caroline's capture and presumed death dealt us a serious blow, and the beginning of 2005 was a very dark time. Many of us feared that the raid on her home would be the first of many attacks to come, and we went even further underground. Count Orzaiz and others began the process of establishing safe houses for us. This system of enclaves would grow over the coming years into one of the major organizational foundations of our movement. Meanwhile, Doctor Zia and I used our corporate resources to gather intelligence on Utopia and keep ourselves safe.

This *repli sur soi* was stifling to many, most of all Divis Mal himself. He understood like few of us could that the movement needed to keep growing. He insisted on it, in fact. Utopia was gaining ever more power, becoming a media darling for its environmental clean-up efforts and slowly infiltrating all channels of political control. If we were to emancipate novas, we needed to act and act quickly. With words similar to those, Mal left us to our own devices and promised that he would show us the way.

On October 31st, 2005, Mal issued *The Null Manifesto* and the world has never been the same. Our thoughts and beliefs hit the global stage, flooding the OpNet and jumping from every nova's lips. The manifesto told the world that we rejected Zurich, that we were the One Race, something other than human, and that we would build our own society despite those who wished to oppress us. Our movement had undergone its own eruption. A mere 24 hours later, we went public, and our role as the leaders of the nova revolution — and as Utopia's Public Enemy Number One — was cast.

Outing Ourselves

From the second of two essays circulating among Teragen members, mid 2008

Scripture thought it'd be smart if we gave Teragen history two voices. No offense Math Boy, but Christ you're boring! This ain't PBS, so quit glossing over the facts or making them sound like some noble new Crusade to free the Holy Land.

For those of you who don't know me, I'm Leviathan: part-time Primacy, full-time Harvester and poster boy for taint-battered monsters everywhere. I'm the kind of uncle who wants you to sit on his lap.

To recap, Divis Mal, bored with Pedro and his ostrich tactics, decides to share *The Null Manifesto* with the rest of the world. Now Equation Master makes it sound like they all basked in Mal's wisdom and followed suit as fellow revolutionaries. Bullshit! Pedro and his army of think-tank pussies panicked when Mal outed them like a senator soliciting sex in a bathroom. Zia, Scripture, Geryon, Shrapnel and Delorimier wanted to follow in Mal's footsteps, but Raoul and Pedro were acting like coy virgins. They bitched over a decision for the better part of a day before supporting Mal. In for a penny, in for a pound of flesh, I guess.

The next year was a bigass explosion of activity. The ever-charming Count Orzaiz went public with his Terathood and played spin doctor whenever some psycho got out of line and used us as an excuse (y'know, the old "I was too Teragen to know better" argument). We got more than our share of rejects, fuck-ups and groupies who owned everything on the black market that was Teragen, and we got some decent members. Bounty joined after *The Null Manifesto* and so did The Confederate. Both put in a fair share of work and elevated themselves above the merely intrigued. Mal didn't seem to think much of them though; the groupies flocked around him the most, but it didn't seem to matter to him one way or the other. He was all "The movement this" and "The movement that." To Scripture, he was a person, to the rest of us he was commanding general, role model and patriarch all in one. Mal's a pretty private guy that way.

About then, Count Orzaiz announced a tour to boost Teragen awareness and alleviate the fears of some governments. Attacks under the banner of the Teragen were breaking out worldwide, mostly by losers and outcasts trying to impress us. Orzaiz had his work cut out for him, or at least, that's how the official line went. The good count's second agenda was to contact different novas and enlighten them to Mal's words; he's pretty persuasive that way. Of course we all knew that Interpol, T2M and bunch of other players were keeping a hawk's eye on Captain Gigolo, but what they didn't know was that he had a hidden entourage accompanying him. There was Jenny Fynn (or "Speck" when she felt like playing elite), this chick the size of a thumb hidden in a hollow can of shaving cream, and there was Fetch, a tracker nobody could see or sense. While the count played flamboyant stage magician, his two friends were consolidating power bases and networks in the region. Orzaiz's biggest recruits at this time were Sin-Eater in Bombay and yours truly out of Brooklyn.

Comment appended to file

My "ostrich" tactics, as you so eloquently put it, were not born out of fear, Leviathan. Perhaps your form has made you forget the nuances of subtlety, but we needed to be cautious in those days. We had no basis of strength save our conviction. Embracing Mal's manifesto is certainly not a decision I regret, but it could have benefited from better judgement. We were fractions of a second away from falling to a Utopia covert operations squad. Deride my hesitation all you want; Mal knew where my loyalties lay. My decisions came from the knowledge that we were nearly doomed before our movement began. And my code name is The Mathematician, not Math Boy.

— Pedro Santiago, The Mathematician

Comment appended to file

How dare you insult the Beacon Mal, Leviathan? It's not your right to scrutinize his decision to accept all novas as family. Turning his selfless acts into accusations of ego-masturbation is an affront to all those within the Kabal and the Cult of Mal. All those who wish to join the Teragen, regardless of reason, have a right to do so. That's the crux of *The Null Manifesto*. How can you support it and still insult those who don't fit within your accepted views? You are a HYPOCRITE!

— Clarion, The Thunder of Mal, the 13th Apostle and Leader of the Kabal.

Comment appended to Clarion's post

You said masturbation. Heh, heh, heh, heh.

— Leviathan

Brave New World

2006 was a good year for us. While Orzaiz played jet-setter, the Teragen grew and formed internal movements around political and spiritual agendas. Wank-boy Clarion's arrival with the Kabal, along with Scripture's Mal worship, formed the religious camp. The Primacy, under Shrapnel and another former elite called Swarm Queen, played the political angle, while Zia's Harvesters and a new group of poseurs called Pandaimonion fell into their own categories.

Two more interesting things happened that year: the introduction of Tarik and his Companions and the big rally in Mexico.

In July, 2006, a group of self-proclaimed Terats killed Tehran Mullah Ayatollah Sa'ati. It had happened before, so no big surprise. Problem was, though, that the mullah was an important guy for the Shi'ites, and this nearly set off an Islamic jihad against anyone with a node. Like the Shi'ite faction needed a reason; they'd been arresting anyone who erupted on trumped up charges since the *Galatea* blew and executing any who couldn't escape. Believe it or not, it was Utopia (thanks to a T2M diplomat named Geisha) who convinced the various imams that discretion was best.

Now that the Teragen was supposedly responsible for a big-wig assassination, Utopia stepped up its "Teragen: Bad, Utopia: Good" campaign. It harassed the few public Terats, various governments audited Count Orzaiz and his father, and rumor has it, DeVries received good money to send execution squads after us. Now, we understand the need to lash out against the oppressors, so the mullah assassination was no big whoop. The problem was, we were tired of being scapegoats for any nova with an ax to grind. Mal was pissed. He didn't care about the murder, but he didn't like the Teragen being the convenient target. So, Mal rounded up a small team to get to the bottom of things. Scripture went in with some Terats who knew the region — K'toub, Wah'esh and Noor if I remember right — to uncover the truth behind the attack and to make them into examples for future killjoys.

After months of searching, the group encountered Tarik ibn'Mahmoud in Damascus. Leader of the Companions—an Islamic counterpart to the Teragen— Tarik handed over the corpses of the two novas responsible for the Mullah's death, and put his vast network of cells and contacts at our disposal. We scored a coup when we brought Tarik in.

It was through Tarik's ally Sloppy Joe that the Teragen finally had its first proof to support Bounty's accusations of a sinister Utopian agenda. The inclusion of Tarik and his Companions strengthened the Teragen into an international force of reckoning.

October saw the open Teragen rally in Toluca, Mexico, with Feathered Serpent and Rattler playing host. T2M Americas was in town too, but they were lucky they didn't pull anything then. We had enough supporters to take over the damn country if we had wanted to. Still can't figure out why we didn't, but Algorithm Lad kept muttering something about us being one decimal place away from initiating a nuclear holocaust. Yeah, whatever.

Comment appended to file

Leviathan, pal! You know I ain't got no gripe with your body politic, but 2006 had major issues. That year saw our brothers and sisters used as baseline whores in Africa and Kashmir. While we were whooping it up, celebrating the fact we had spines, Utopia consolidated its most influential power base in Addis Ababa. They used novas like mules to terraform Ethiopia, and we sat back stroking our Dirk Digglers because of some touchy-feely rally in Mexico. Sure, the poseurs thought it rocked, but I don't remember joining the Teragen for the social benefits. We had the opportunity to stop Utopia from gaining Ethiopia as a stronghold, and we choked because we didn't react. 2006 wasn't good for us. It was good for our egos, and that's it. You and Orzaiz both seem to think that the Teragen is a fucking tea dance, and it ain't, it's a war against the less fit. Figure it out before one of those T2M bozos knocks your fuckin' head in.

— Barry Meldrum, The Confederate

Comment appended to The Confederate's post

Confederate:

Animals react, and we are not animals. There is such a thing as cause and effect. I understand your grievances against the Ethiopian terraforming endeavor, but hindsight has given us a greater "Bounty" in return. Had Utopia not converted that section of Earth, then Bounty would have erupted in a different fashion, and we would not enjoy the pleasure of her company. I think we often overlook Bene's contributions to this family simply because she does not take credit for them. Without her and Geryon, it would have taken us much longer to catch on to Aeon's agenda. Without Bene, we could not breed and our cause would be relegated to a single generation. I'm willing to sacrifice Club Utopia in Addis Ababa in exchange for Bounty. Our advantage spans generations, and our sacrifices now ensure the longevity of the Teragen.

And no, the Teragen is not a war. It is a social movement. You'll realize this once you've grown up a bit.

— Count Raoul Orzaiz

Mal's Slumber

With 2006 closing on an upswing, Mal decided to enter his fourth Chrysalis. He warned us this was going to be a long sleep. During this time of reflection (that's what he called it), he wanted the Teragen to find its own way. We had to understand the direction of our united lives without him providing the constant beacon, yada, yada, yada. Funny, but that was the first time I actually had some respect for the guy (I mean besides just his power). I'd been afraid that all of Clarion's and Delorimier's brown nosing was padding his ego in a Marlon Brando sort of way.

What Mal didn't tell us was that his Chrysalis was private. Learning from the Caroline Fong debacle, he entered Chrysalis in a secret location known only to Scripture. Delorimier and a few others panicked, insisting they hold vigils over Mal's sleeping form, but neither Pedro nor Jeremiah would hear of it. This nearly sparked a schism in the Cult of Mal, but Scripture resolved it nicely. He made everyone speak in tongues till they saw things his way. (And on a personal note: I gotta say it was a blast insulting Clarion and Delorimier when you couldn't understand a word they said.... Thanks Scrip, I owe you for that.)

With Mal pursuing his oneness with whatever, the rest of us decided to explore our quantum-boosted selves to the fullest. Narcosis and her Pandaimonion movement kicked off the Divis Mal Bash, a yearlong party to celebrate his Chrysalis, and got some points with hard-core members. The Primacy scored a coup with the defection of NASA flyboy Domenic "Blinker" Thule during the *Atlantis* shuttle flight, although I hear that he's hanging his teleporting hat with Raoul's Casablanicas these days. Bounty also bred the first nova children around then. Unlike the Utopian losers who forfeited the Darwin game, we were fertile and our children, pure nova.

There Will Be Vigilance

Our real kick in the pants came when T2M nabbed Sluice in April of 2007. Sluice was one of Geryon's boys who had decided to defy — peacefully, even — a city order in Tampa banning novas. When Utopia slammed the cuffs on Sluice in the name of the municipality of Tampa, Geryon figured something had to be done. He went on friggin' *Two Minutes Hate*, of all places, and told the world that novas weren't going to be stepped on anymore. The response was a resounding, "Yeah, whatever." Two months later, Geryon hit the big time when he played twist-top with Tampa Mayor Frederick Rupert.

Nasty business that was, not in the way the press played the issue, but how we handled it. Until then, most of our cliques had engaged in some form of civil disobedience Teragen-style, but nothing so extreme. Count Orzaiz ran around like a headless chicken, playing spin doctor. Decimal Guy went ape-shit and spewed out numbers like a caffeinated calculator about how we had just doomed the movement.

I was surprised when Scripture and the Cult of Mal came out in favor of Geryon's actions. While they didn't agree with his methods, they sanctioned his freedom of expression

and choice of justice. The Primacy backed Geryon every step of the way, while the Casablanças and Companions quietly disapproved. The Harvesters — taking a stand for our own independence — supported Nova Vigilance. It was about time somebody seized the Utopian bull by the chuckies and brought it to its knees.

Geryon's actions made a clear cut between the die-hard Teragen and the prissy part-timers who thought they were riding the popularity train. Pandaimonion lost a bunch of supporters, and our popularity dipped for a while. Orzaiz quietly called it a mistake, alienating our baseline advocates, but I called it trimming the fat. For too long, the Teragen was nothing but a cult of personality. We talked change like words were gold, and we debated like thoughts alone mattered. I'm surprised we didn't click our heels together and chant "there's no place like home, there's no place like home." Geryon not only proved that we could act on our beliefs but, also, that there wasn't much anyone could do to stop us. Scripture argued that this also meant greater responsibility, which I think is a crock. The only responsibility we have is to the Teragen. Screw baseline society!

I supported Geryon; his actions shook off the excess baggage. Narcosis and Sin-Eater still had their poseur followers, but for the most part, the trendy Euro-Trash shied away from us. They came back after a few months, mind you, but by then, we recognized the chaff from the wheat.

With Geryon vindicated, Nova Vigilance became a real force to reckon with, and a bunch of us started going out with Geryon. We struck three targets between June and December, while a bunch of losers called TLM (Teragen Liberation Movement) hit another two in the name of Mal. Those yahoos thought they were cheesy OpNet super-crooks and never got our message until it was way too late. See, Geryon and Boom-Boom demolished a Rashoud Facility in Chicago, and TLM figured it was up to bat next and ambushed a high society function in Houston. The feebs didn't think that those rich folk would mix gala soirees and nova bodyguards like Texans mix pickup trucks and shot-guns. The battle got real ugly, with eight baselines dead and two novas seriously wounded — and the hoot of it all was that Orzaiz was attending that function. I've never seen him so pissed; it was hysterical.



LEF JAMES

Nova Vigilance tried showing the children how it was done and liberated a Utopian cargo plane taking a tainted nova to Bahrain. Instead of learning their goddamn lesson, TLM thought it was a one-upmanship contest and went after DeVries' offices in New York. They get their ass kicked by nova bodyguards in Houston, and so, they attack the people who represent most of the novas-for-hire on the planet. Gee, think they had nova protection too? The TLM's leader was this lame-o who called himself Battle-Cry, but he ended up exploding like a Chihuahua in a microwave. Even he didn't deserve that. Aggro, DeVries' on-site elite, earned his keep and scored a lot of points that day.

Geryon's last major hit in 2007 really showed what he meant by commitment. He organized the rescue of the captured TLM Terats. That was another ugly battle, because NYPD had called in T2M Americas to help transport the prisoners. Pretty-boy Skew was there, along with Ana Graça Texeira, Montoya-Bernal, Firefly and Slider. Geryon, Epoch and The Confederate had their hands full until fellow team-mate Gauze sliced through the support structures of a nearby building. T2M broke off its attack to evacuate and restore the collapsing building while NV rescued the prisoners. TLM's remaining members ended up making pretty good Terats once they learned a little discipline.

Getting it Together

The Teragen was starting to fall apart in Mal's absence, and all because Terats weren't communicating their agendas. We looked disorganized, and we were. Terat glory hounds went on talk shows and news forums everywhere, espousing our views to the world. Problem is, we don't have one single view. In the span of three weeks in December, 2007, Boom-Boom's on the Montebello Show acting like a KISS reject, The Apostle's talking to reporters about the divinity of Mal, and NI's interviewing Orzaiz about a nova homeland. Every statement or interview made contradicted what some other Terat said. And when a reporter was smart enough to point out the inconsistencies, members like Boom-Boom could only respond: "Yeah man, but Orzaiz blows. I'm Mal'icious." How the hell were we supposed to get any respect when we were acting like a frat party?

Matters finally came to a head when in January 2008, Geryon, Swarm Queen, Devian and yours truly fought T2M on the UN's doorstep. Geryon wanted to go in and address the assembly, but T2M somehow got wind of our plan and showed up to stop us. Both sides came away hurt and bearing a deeper grudge than before. We didn't realize it then, but that event changed everything. The night before the attack, the Geometric Gymnast calls me up, all frantic; he's telling Geryon and me not to go forward with the attack because we were going to alienate future allies. We didn't listen.

I don't regret fighting T2M, but I finally understood what Pedro meant when somebody aced Slider, and Corbin went underground. We might have been able to get Corbin on our side, rather than losing him to the Aberrants.

Anyway, Orzaiz, The Algebrator and Scripture were sick of that shit. They set a Pantheon meeting for June that would iron out the problems within the Teragen once and for all. Until then, they advised us, don't do anything rash, the subtext being don't kill anyone and don't give anymore interviews. Way to incite Geryon folks. Telling Geryon not to commit violence is like telling a baby not to piss itself. It was only a month later that he flew into Johannesburg and aced that South African big-wig Chigwedere, the guy who was tagging novas with radio beacons. Right on, I say.

Comment appended to file

Really Leviathan. You're not saying we should have gone easy on Corbin, are you? I don't care what that prissy soccer boy is going through now or what he knows. He's the enemy, and it doesn't matter what spin you put on it. If he's got information on Utopia, cool. We just need Delorimier to tank him up to the point of talking or to get Narcosis to hip-lock him. Either way, we don't need him as an ally. He's still a zip licker, and he'll cramp our style with that holier-than-thou crap. Let him rot on the end of my fist, because when I get my hands on Corbin, that's where he'll be staying.

— Geryon

The Slider Incident

I didn't think Utopia was going to slip up this soon, but on May 13, 2008, T2M member Slip-n-Slide got herself mortally bitch-slapped in Calcutta. Suddenly Tarik, Sin-Eater and Narcosis were squeezing their regional sources for all they were worth and came back with a wealth of information on the hit. The local elites didn't have a clue who aced Slider, but plenty of foreign novas were spotted in the city the previous day, so it's not like there was a shortage of suspects. Second bit of interesting news was that Slider was not in Calcutta on T2M business; she had been contracted out to Novelty for some reason. Thirdly, was the fact that a Utopian investigation team was on hand to close the crime scene and conduct a "private" investigation before Slider's blood was even cold (and the N! camera crews *still* beat them to the scene). Now that's pretty strange; Calcutta Offices were telling reporters they didn't know Slider was in town at the same time that a Utopia team was handling the murder scene.

Anyway, Corbin, Slider's best chum, fled her funeral for some reason, and we suddenly got scattered information on a backlash forming against Utopia. Rather than sit back and enjoy the fireworks, Orzaiz lit his own match and secretly forwarded information on the Calcutta incident to newspapers around the world — and if reporters are good at one thing, it's math. They put two and two together and ran feature stories accusing Project Utopia of all sorts of nasty crap. Predictably, Utopia panicked and tried to finger us like an easy date. The press, though, saw a chink in the shiny knight's armor and decided to see what was underneath. Next thing we knew, Utopia was under investigation by the Directive.

I wish Pax was around so I could laugh in his sanctimonious face. His life this past decade has been dedicated to a worm-ridden lie.

Geryon and his NV buddy Epoch caught up with Corbin once in New Zealand. They got into a big grudge-match, and the amazing Soccer Boy pulled some tricks out of his bag and got away from NV. I guess that flushed any real hope of getting tight with the Aberrants.

On the other hand, we were able to get a hold of T2M Europe's Saxon. Orzaiz told us where he'd be, and good old Nova Vigilance — again, with yours truly in the fray — descended on him in Mumbai like the thumb of God and came away with a breathing T2M trophy. We may not have won the war yet, but that was one sweet battle.

Epilogue: Where are We Going?

The June 3rd meeting of the Pantheon is underway now, and I want to add something to this little history. Just so you know, we're done with the first night of talking and negotiating in this little island mansion. Blinker, working for Orzaiz, warped us directly here, so none of us know exactly where we are, and I kind of think the count likes it that way.

Earlier, we got to meet the major players in the Pantheon and learn their agendas. Even though people disapproved of one faction or another, we pretty much bit our lips. That's as far as the Sesame Street cooperation game went, however. Scripture and the Mathematician kept butting heads over religion and politics. Rather than uniting the Teragen under one rule, they're fragmenting the movement into the lobbyists, the fanatics and the rebels. If you're a Terat, it's becoming association by default, like gangs in prison using skin-color as basis for alliances. The day ended politely enough, with big smiles carrying just a hint of fangs and a handshake firm enough to make the other person wince. We all retired for the evening with enough private agendas to carry a soap opera for a decade. Tomorrow, we do the official group introductions and outline our current plan of attack on Utopia. All this socializing and hypocrisy has left me with one thought, though:

Where are we going?

The Confederate was right when he said we've missed too many opportunities. It's time we stopped screwing around and started taking decisive steps in securing our rights. And that means starting with ourselves. We have to clean house, and we've got to toilet flush all the cute pets that followed us home.

If you're reading this Mal, then lead us. Lead us, or step aside. I'm getting tired of this introspective, Zen searching-and-yearning crap. We have to stop running from something (and leaving a trail of bodies behind us) and start running toward something that will create the nova society we seek. It's time we pulled the weight of our words. If we can't, then we are the thugs Utopia says we are.

Beliefs and Goals

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Welcome to the Show

...Wake up Saxon, time to see what this is all about.... Yeah, that's it, feeling better? I hope not, that broken leg looks painful; here let me help....

[scream]

So, how does it feel to be on the "other side"? Don't bother looking around.... Oh, right, you can't, you're bound to that chair. You could try closing your eyelids but that would probably rip them off — not very pleasant, trust me. If you managed to escape, there's nowhere to run to, might as well sit down and enjoy the show. And don't mind the contraption you're hooked up to, it's more painful than it looks. It's just not turned on at the moment. And don't try anything; you're so full of mox right now that your node may as well have been plucked like a grape.

Where are you, does it matter? It's nice to see the tables turned, you've been at us since the whole Slider thing happened, so eager to believe that the Teragen was behind it all. Guess what, we weren't, but I kinda wish we'd done it, I'm so tired of T2M's moralistic bullshit.

Ah, but it always easier to blame us than to open your eyes and see what's really happening. Why do you hate us so much? We are Teragen — Marvels, Portents and Monsters — true, but we haven't sold out. Look at you, Utopia's little soldier, hiding behind a mask, part of Utopia's nova-powered Village People of Righteousness; are you so ashamed of what you've become that you have to hide? And just who are you hiding from, the baselines? So wrapped up in the Project's lies you feel like a freak — so out of place with your glowing eyes that they force you to wear a mask. Face it, you're not like them; you might have been, but that was before. You're better now; you're of the One Race, even if you are an assimilationist sycophant. But you act like a coward and bow down to the baselines, kissing their asses, seeking their acceptance, selling yourself for a measly six figure salary. What does it take to wake you Uncle Toms up?

Do you think that Utopia even cares about where you are? You're just another casualty, another number chalked off their list — another nova they don't have to control — another nova that they don't have to sterilize.

Right, Saxon you're not dead — yet — but to Utopia you are. Let me show you....

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\\RUN FETCH
:::KEYWORD:
\\saxon
:::LIMIT:
\\printed media dated 27 may 2008
:::RETRIEVING...
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Mumbai News, 05/27/2008

SAXON MISSING, FEARED DEAD.

Renowned T2M Europe member Saxon was reported missing yesterday and presumed dead. Team Tomorrow and Utopia refused to comment, stating only that Saxon was involved in the ongoing investigation into Slider's death. During the news conference, a Project Utopia spokesperson refused to confirm that the subjects of the investigation were members of Teragen or if they were responsible for Saxon's disappearance. Should it be deemed necessary, a funeral will be held at T2M Europe Headquarters in Venice.

\\END

You see, they don't care, but as long you're going to die doing Utopia's dirty work, I might as well give you a ride you won't forget. You wanted to learn about the Teragen, well my whoring friend, be ready to have your orderly world turned on its head because that's exactly what's going to happen....

The First Day: Common Ground

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:::LOADING...

Exerpt: *The Null Manifesto*

We are own our nation; to be nova is to transcend the baselines from which we evolved. We want only to live in accord with the promptings which come from our true selves. Why is that so revolutionary? We exist beyond human comprehension, and while we have yet to define our own laws, we must have the space and freedom necessary to chart our own course. Only those novas who are too lazy or too comfortable to think for themselves, to judge and regulate their own behavior accordingly, obey baseline laws. True members of the One Race sense their own laws within them; things are forbidden to them that a common baseline will do any day of the year, and other things are allowed to them that are generally despised. Each nova must stand on her or his own feet. I beseech all members of



Estimated Power Levels

Strength: 2
Intellect: 7
Speed: 6
Offense: 6
Defense: 5
Versatility: 7

Synapse

Birth Name: Alex Doan
Date of Birth: June 26, 1990
Place of Origin: Seattle, Washington
Occupation: Hacker
Archetype: Portent (first stage)

Powers: Synapse is data. He has mastery of electronics, computers in particular. He can extend his consciousness into the OpNet, where he can access any system, given the right amount of time. His real body in a coma, Synapse can manifest as totally lifelike quantum holograms, having both mass and dimension, as long as there is a nearby electrical source. He can also manipulate energy defensively and offensively.

Background: T2M Americas accidentally put Alex in a coma when they destroyed the arcade the boy was in during the take down of a renegade nova. As a show of good faith (and to prevent a lawsuit), Team Tomorrow took the boy to a special Triton facility. Alex's body was hooked up to an advanced mainframe, using the latest

technology to keep his body and mind stimulated. This unprecedented level of input caused him to erupt. Unconsciously, Alex's mind drifted into the mainframe and eventually into the OpNet, where he learned everything that was on it. It was a couple of years before Alex "discovered" his body and what had really happened to him. Seething with anger — toward his frail body, T2M and Project Utopia — he engineered his escape in 2005. Using his newly discovered powers, he arranged to have his body and the mainframe transported to a safe location in New York City, all without Utopia finding out, until it was too late. Once safe, he contacted Mal personally and asked to join the Teragen.

Since then, Synapse has been the tech and data whiz of the movement. Only 18 and bitter at being a cripple, Synapse hates all baselines and especially Utopia, whom he blames for keeping him alive.

Few know what Synapse really looks like, because he constantly changes shape and identity. Most know Alex as Synapse, but he has scripted a handful of identities he uses to infiltrate the many cliques of the Teragen. As "Code," he is one of Narcosis' followers, and "Interrupt" helps spread Primacy propaganda through the OpNet.

Homo sapiens novus to follow the path that will take them to a better understanding of what and who they are. This will require courage, but the chick that fears the outside world dies in its egg. To be born, the One Race must destroy its egg and, with time, fly. For this we are slandered, but we cannot claim surprise. Those few powerful individuals with courage and character have always seemed sinister to the rest. Anything that threatens the calm in which the baselines live, they call "revolutionary." They have become nervous because they realize that, with the coming of the One Race, the rules by which they have lived are no longer valid. The labels they affix to us are of no concern. We cannot and will not apologize for a difference this fundamental. We must explore what it is to be nova, not for the betterment of the human race, but for the betterment of the nova race. Perhaps there are some novas who prefer to stay with the baseline herd for the warmth it provides. I say obtain your warmth from equals. Humans do not require the companionship of monkeys, and likewise, novas don't require the companionship of baselines. We are destined to make a strange and terrible journey, and this we cannot do alone. While each nova must walk his or her own path, we must gather and share our knowledge and our companionship. We are at the gates of a glorious new age, and we must take the first steps toward our destiny; to do this we need to be one. Realize that it is only novas who can lead this journey. *Homo sapiens sapiens* has had its chance — it is now the age of the One Race.

Whosoever would be a creator, must first destroy, and in this new age of the One Race, a terrible angel is loosed, preparing his grand creation.

;;;Continue? [Y/N]
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There are no accidents

Don't scoff Saxon, it might read like propaganda, but be honest, it touched a chord in you. Would you believe it more if it had a Utopia or UN logo? The Teragen is not the supervillain organization NI makes us out to be. Yeah, a few of us like to bash heads and teach you fools a lesson or two, but that's not why we're around. And we aren't blind acolytes of Mal either, though to meet him really is to catch a glimpse of our full potential.

What are we then? A family. The essence of a Terat isn't a costume or psychopathic tendencies — I think Team Tomorrow has those bases covered — but rather the fact that we know we are different. Whatever caused us to erupt transformed us into a new species. However baselines choose to deal with this is up to them, but it's clear they're no longer the dominant species on this planet. So why should we sacrifice ourselves to clean up their mistakes or fight their wars? Look at them, they're petty, materialistic and vain; they murder each other over centuries-old philosophical details; they nearly undermined the ecology of their one home planet — and yet *they* are trying to mold *us* into their image of what novas are supposed to be.

What a load of garbage. We're unique; we're the new gods in a faithless age, we're more than corporate sponsorship and national flags. It pains me to torture you, but better a dead nova than a brother who fails to see the "big picture." Think of me as a patriot, Saxon.

\\run cycle level 03
;;;EXECUTING...capacitors charged...
[scream]
;;;BIO-SCAN: [heart rate LOW] [quantum flux 34.87] [stress index HIGH]:
;;;CONTINUE? [Y/N]
\\n
\\run video stream New.Race
;;;D/L
;;;Ready...

Video feed, Televisa 13, October 7th, 2006

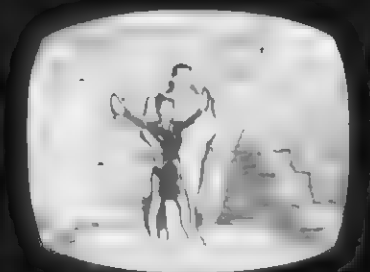
BROADCAST JOINED IN MEDIAS RES



WE ARE REPORTING LIVE FROM TOLOCA, MEXICO, THE LATEST SITE OF A TERAGEN SPONSORED RALLY. ALTHOUGH NOT EVEN A YEAR OLD, THIS NOVA SUPREMACIST MOVEMENT HAS GARNERED A CONSIDERABLE FOLLOWING ACROSS THE WORLD. THE TERAGEN PHILOSOPHY RESONATES WITH THE YOUTH CULTURE PARTICULARLY WELL



AS YOU CAN SEE BY LOOKING AT THE AUDIENCE HERE TODAY. ALTHOUGH THIS IS TO BE A "PEACEFUL" DEMONSTRATION, MEMBERS OF T2M ARE ON STAND-BY, AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT IS OUT IN FULL FORCE. WE NOW TAKE YOU TO MIGUEL COVERING THE SPEECHES OF LEADING TERAGEN FIGURES, FEATHERED SERPENT AND RATTLESN



CHANTING: TER-A-GEN! TER-A-GEN! TER-A-GEN! TER-A-GEN!

RATTLESN: IT IS TIME, MY FRIENDS, TO END THE OPPRESSION AND SECOND-CLASS CITIZENSHIP OF NOVAS AROUND THE WORLD. TIME FOR BASELINES EVERYWHERE TO REALIZE THAT WE ARE MORE THAN TOOLS — THAT WE ARE A NEW RACE AND THAT WE'LL NO LONGER STAND BY AND SEE OUR POTENTIAL WASTED BY UTOPIA. OUR BLOOD IS SPILT IN PLACES YOU CAN NEITHER PRONOUNCE NOR CARE ABOUT ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.



ACCIDENTS DO NOT JUST HAPPEN, AND GALATEA WAS NOT A RANDOM OCCURRENCE. WE, HOMO SAPIENS NOVIUS, WERE MEANT TO HAPPEN — WE ARE AGENTS OF DESTINY. ALL OVER THE WORLD, PEOPLE WELCOMED THE NOVAS, HAPPY TO HAVE 'HEROES' TO SAVE BASELINES FROM THEIR OWN VICES — WE HAD ARRIVED TO JUSTIFY THEIR MATERIALISTIC SHALLOWNESS. EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US, UTOPIAN, ELITE OR TERAT, IS DIFFERENT — THE ZURICH ACCORD IS MISGUIDED AND WRONG, THE CHURCH IS STUPID, OUTDATED AND WRONG. WE ARE NOT HUMAN, WE'RE TRANS HUMAN.



BASELINE GOVERNMENTS, CORPORATIONS AND RELIGIONS HOPE TO BLIND US FOREVER, TO KEEP THE WOOL OF IGNORANCE OVER OUR EYES — FEARFUL THAT ONE DAY, NOVAS AROUND THE WORLD WILL WAKE UP AND REALIZE THE PLAIN TRUTH. IT'S ALL ABOUT DARWIN'S DANCE. THE WRITING IS ON THE WALL — CALL US ABERRANTS, FREAKS OR MONSTERS. IT DOES NOT MATTER BECAUSE WE ARE MORE THESE AND MORE.



FEATHERED SERPENT: THE CHOICE IS SIMPLE: ADMIT THE TRUTH AND WELCOME US AS THE ONE RACE. WE WILL ACCEPT NOTHING LESS.

There is no Taint, only Progress

LOAD MORE
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Excerpt: "Terrible Angels: The Voice of Nova Liberation"

The M-R node is not what makes us different, it is merely the catalyst that begins our transformation. Like apes before us, the M-R node has allowed novas to walk metaphorically upright, but it is not what defines us; it is only the first step. From there, all novas have a duty to develop their powers; to look into the abyss of progress and have the conviction to emerge changed — transformed. If we were "human," we would be unable to manipulate quantum energies, but we are not human and taint certifies our distinction.

Only baseline sentimentality makes us cling to the notion of taint as an aberration. Humans consider their hairless bodies a mark of evolution over primates, but to the apes a hairless body must seem hideous, out of place, wrong according to their limited and flawed perspectives. The same is happening now. Nature is adapting our bodies to better handle the stress of quantum manipulation — evolution trying to find the perfect shape. In the process, we look less human, but that is because we are evolving into something different. Think of taint as progress; accept it, and allow it to course through you, to fill you with potential and power. To deny taint is to deny what makes you nova....

::::CONTINUE? [Y/N]

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\\open portal

::::CONFIRM \\ opening AIRLOCKS could result in SECURITY BREECH...[Y/N]

\\y

\\begin recording...

::::RECORDING...

Audio recording, subjects: Synapse, Sin-Eater and Saxon

- Sin-Eater: What a pleasant surprise. Synapse, I take it we're secure?
- Synapse: As always my dear. How's business?
- Sin-Eater: Busy.... Is that the famed Saxon with you?
- Synapse: For now. Haven't finished toying with him... yet.
- Sin-Eater: Never thought of him as having aberrations — too bad, I hate it when they wear masks. Guess I'll be losing another customer. What can I do for you two lovers?
- Synapse: Show him the glories of taint, the fool still has it in his head that it is somehow wrong, unnatural. I figured I'd let you have a chance to explain it to him... maybe see if we can bring him around?
- Sin-Eater: Taint is so misunderstood. A shame really. People should take more time to appreciating it, to wonder at its glory. Damn the puritans and religious freaks who flooded our heads with backward notions that it's wrong to feel, to give into the fundamental needs of the body. Even today, in these progressive times, it is still "wrong" to indulge. Baselines are just weak and cognitively challenged.

Here, let me show you, Saxon. Stop fighting it. You feel it; it may be at night, during moments of stress, but you feel it. I know you do. It flows through you, trying to open your eyes, to push your psyche through to the other side. And when you do give in, it feels so good. Remember the first time your eyes blazed, I am sure you do, just like you remember your eruption.

But it doesn't stop there, the more you fight it, the more powerful it becomes — because it is the real you. Taint is only the physical manifestation, the outward signs that you are changing on a very basic level. The more you try to fight it, remove it, the more taint takes hold of your mind and warps you — makes you into an aberrant parody of who you really are, who you're meant to be.

Feel my touch, that's not blood rushing to your skin, it's taint. Don't fight it. I know you're aroused, not by simple desire, but a deeper, stronger feeling. It hurts, yes, because you are blocking it, hanging on to that human shell of yours.

A shell, Saxon, because that's all it is now. A cocoon to protect you while you transform, while your mind wraps itself around your true potential. The more you resist, the more taint takes over, until you are nothing but a mindless beast. You must use taint, master it for it is the only way you can influence it. Regardless of what you think you are, taint is your true self.

That's it, give in to it; let it surge through you....

- Saxon: [scream] Noooooo!

::::BIO-SCAN: subject in shock
\\ administer FIRST AID? [Y/N]
\\y...stabilize only
::::STABILIZING...

- Sin-Eater: He's not ready. A shame really, I was starting to enjoy him....
- Synapse: It's too much. You either know and accept or you guilt yourself into ignorance. It's starting to happen. The whole BaA-BaA, baseline-acting, baseline-appearing assimilationist crap is coming to an end. Novas are changing, growing tainted, and the more they do, the more they'll fight it, and then they'll lose themselves to it. They say we're aberrations, horrors and travesties of the "human race." Morons. Taint is a tool, and it is only baseline morals that make novas monsters. It is not necessary to remove the "monster" from a nova, as Utopia thinks; the key is to remove the "human" from nova and let the juju flow.

A Philosophical Inquiry

[ALARM]
::::SUBJECT regaining CONSCIOUSNESS...
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Welcome back. Seems like you've made a little mess.... Look at the depths to which the magnificent Saxon has plummeted. N! would pay handsomely for footage of you right now, but there's no way I'd sell you out to make one of their baseline execs richer. Who in T2M would do the same for you?

Don't look at me with contempt, you're trying to fight me now, trying to summon your last ounce of strength to come at me — not that I'm really there — but the computer equipment surrounding you is rather expensive. You're wondering what sort of monster I am? Here, let me show you....

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Estimated Power Levels:

Strength: 2
Intellect: 4
Speed: 3
Offense: 6
Defense: 4
Versatility: 7

Sin-Eater

Birth Name: Meena Harjapaton
Date of Birth: January 9, 1983
Place of Origin: Mumbai, India
Occupation: "Taint consultant," Teragen recruiter

Archetype: Monster (first stage)

Powers: Sin-Eater has limited control of others' forms and quantum. Baseline opponents can be toyed with like clay, but nova opponents fear her because of her control over the stuff that makes them novas. She can absorb quantum and taint and reshape a nova's body, to the point of erasing physical and mental aberrations, or channel it into him to cause drastic (and possibly deadly) increases in such problems. These effects are only temporary, however.

Background: Meena was an untouchable in Mumbai until her eruption in 2004. By then, the city had risen to unprecedented heights of glamour, and some of the pretty-boy stars decided Meena was fair game for their sexual appetites.

With the second of three rapists on top of her and the filth of the city beneath her, she erupted. Suddenly she coursed with dark power and sent it flowing into her assailants. She watched as they screamed and pleaded, while their bodies warped into forms so monstrous that their organs burst.

Meena rapidly found a niche for herself in the city of stars. Taint was unacceptable for media darlings, and she began absorbing excess taint for a very high price. She could never permanently cure the starlets of their aberrations, but that only guaranteed they would come back. In 2005, after the Teragen went public, she met with Raoul Orzaiz and entered the movement, seeing in it a place where novas understood taint instead of fearing it. She still operates her "Purity Clinic" in Bombay (and consults with other rich novas around the world), despite rumors that she is a Terat. She searches her base of shallow clients for the few who have the backbone to join the movement.

What is Teras?

This is a question I am sure we've all asked ourselves since the earliest days. While it took Caroline to spell it out, I am sure most Terats know, deep down inside, what it really means. The first glimpses come with the eruption; harrowing images of what we are destined to become. Most forget, the unfortunate ones, but those blessed with vision know and begin the great journey. Being a Terat is not a "thing" one becomes — though the ignorant masses see it as such. It is a process, a road that leads to full awareness of nova-hood. Some describe it as the method by which our human self is stripped away, evolved, but this is a somewhat crass explanation.

"Marvel," "Portent" and "Monster" are not the easy concepts they appear to be. Too many of our numbers latch on to these definitions without truly understanding; they forsake the road for the billboards shouting slogans at them. At least they are moving in the right direction.

Marvel

We are new. In a time of indifference and violence we've arrived — without the appearance of novas, I doubt the world would have entered the 21st century so peacefully. And where would baselines be without us? It sounds trite and overly baseline, but when we erupted, we gave the cowering masses something to believe in once more. In a matter of months, we awakened in many a sense of wonder and purpose that Hollywood and the church had been unable to for years and centuries, respectively. We are real! We are the Marvels of this new world... not curiosities or freaks.

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;;;RUN? [Y/N]

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From N!'s *Beautiful Nova*, aired February 3, 2008; last on-air sighting of host Jeffrey Hiens



• Hiens: We're coming to you live from Calcutta, India on the eve of the premier of *One God*, media starlet and nova bad girl Narcosis' latest movie. Banned in Canada and throughout most of Europe, the controversial film has shocked many, baseline and nova included, but has garnered a tremendous following. Right now, the streets outside Narcosis' home are flooded with adoring fans — some dancing, others frolicking for the self-proclaimed "Queen of the Pandaimonion." Before taking you inside, into the boudoir of Narcosis in an N! exclusive, let's see



what the youth of today see in the sensuous Narcosis....

• Fan One [male]: You either get her or you don't, man. I remember seeing my dad's old videos from the 90s and 80s, and those fossils back then have nothing on Narcosis.

Man, she's everything — all I want. God, why follow some stuck up dude on a cross or a fat guy when you have Narcosis and the Pandaimonion? Man, they rock...



• Fan Two [female]: Yeah, Slider is cute and that Mexican chick's salutary, but they're nothing new — they're pretty baseline. If I wanted to worship a baseline like me, I'd bow to my sister or whatever. Now Narcosis.... Oh, man, she's more than that.... She's opening our eyes to a new world, a world of freedom — they're the new gods and it's time more noticed and started following.... Like, look, before they came, we had nothing except pollution and crap like that.... Now look... Pandaimonion!

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Portent

The present has so blinded us to the future that we act like baselines and believe that today will bleed into tomorrow and so on — that things will continue as they are now. Poor baselines, bloated on commercialism and media saturation, fail to understand the passage of time. Few even think it incredible that only 10 years have passed since the *Galatea*. But the future is anything but predictable, and to accept this and focus on what lies beyond tomorrow is what being a Portent is all about. They are the visionaries, those willing to shed their human "fear" and embrace that which is most unknown and ephemeral: what is to come. Baselines assume Utopia will be there and that we'll be there, but is this the case? Do we even belong on Earth? To be Terat is to know potential, and to be potential, one must accept it in all its incarnations. One must be willing to explore and experiment, to try new paths and new directions — to be a Portent is to walk your own path, unfettered by fear, doubt or baseline hesitations.

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:::ENCRYPTED \\ CRACK? [Y/N]
\\y
:::23%
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:::55%
:::73%
:::90%
:::decrypted...LOADING
:::RUN? [Y/N]
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Broadcast from Space Shuttle *Atlantis*, 04/22/2007

- *Atlantis*: Ready to begin test, Houston, nova subject Domenic Thule ready. Awaiting confirmation....
- NASA: Roger, *Atlantis*. Begin test — all systems go. Ready when you are, Captain....
- *Atlantis*: Okay, open bay doors.... Good luck Domenic! Okay, NASA, he's out, things look good. Charge capacitors on my mark.... Now! Coordination high, seems to be adapting well.... Wait.... What's going on...?
- NASA: *Atlantis*, what's happening? Systems indicating he's removing his suit — what's going on up there?
- *Atlantis*: Jesus, have no idea.... Try reeling him in before he cuts the umbilical cord. Christ. There's no way he could survive like that.... Wait he's moving; do we have a visual...? He's just looking at us, his body shimmering... like it's absorbing light —

good God, he's creating what seems like a black hole.... Get us out of here, qui—
[static]

- NASA: Your signal is breaking up. *Atlantis*, say again...
- *Atlantis*: He's— on... I say... He's.... [static]
- NASA: Say again, *Atlantis*. Your signal is garbled.
- *Atlantis*: He's gone, vanished right before our eyes. He just looked at us, waved and disappeared — like he imploded. Wait, there's something out there, floating in space. It's one of those weird — whaddya call them, a tarot card — number 16, with a drawing of some building and the word Teragen written over the card....

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Monster

We are no longer human, this is the plain truth. We are the proverbial "other," the bogeymen hiding underneath beds. Eventually, baselines will see past the media hype spun by Utopia and discover this for themselves. It's a farce to cling to our human pasts — we may not be an entirely new species, but aside from the most basic of biology, we share little with baselines. We know it. They sense it. And the best way to sever all ties to our past is to act in ways that challenge our preconceptions of what "baseline" means. We have moral codes that vary from much looser than baselines' to much narrower. Perhaps killing is allowed to me, whereas consuming toxins like alcohol or moxinoquantimine is not. I must determine for myself what is right.

Accepting this is another matter. Baselines particularly hate those of us who think for ourselves. It threatens them. Our liberation from baseline traditions and mores triggers in them an urge to control or destroy. One tool they hope to use to regain control over us is language. The word aberrant, in particular, is loaded with hatred and ignorance and prejudice. In essence, it means "monster."

We must discover what makes us other, and if this means being Monsters, then so be it. Remember that such terms define us according to human standards; we cannot be bound by their outmoded conceptions of morality. What is inappropriate or wrong for a baseline may not be inappropriate for a nova, and vice versa. They need their little "thou-shalt-nots." We do not. Granted, to some Terats, the Monster allows them to "cut loose" and give in to feral drives and wreak havoc, but through their mistakes, we better understand the process. Perhaps by becoming something other than "human," we can unlock the clues needed to better understand "nova."

— Scripture

\\load POLICE REPORT, 24/11/07

;;;RETRIEVING...

;;;DISPLAY? [Y/N]

\\y

Case N345-LX34 — 11/23/2007

Type of Incident: Multiple Felonious Homicide

Victims: Diego Guzman (WM 26), Anna Venn (WF 22), Franco Cobert (AAM 30), Leah Lacroix (WF 24), John Voight (WM 34), David Mohk (WM 14), Amy Guzman (WF 16), John/ Jane Doe (unknown)

Location: 1576 28th Street Apt. 10B, New York

Officer in Charge: Det. B. Caulder, Homicide Squad

Case Summary:

Arrived on scene 11:03 PM on 11/23/2007 after uniformed officers responded to a report of a foul smell originating from apartment 10B. The crime scene consisted of a small two-room basement apartment. The first room, the living room, was where most of the bodies were found — or what was left of them. Four victims were connected/attached to the ceiling and wall by what appears to be biological material — later confirmed to be the remains of the eighth and final victim.

Their skin, what remained, showed burn marks consistent with exposure to radiation — though there were no other signs of possible contamination. Preliminary findings of the Medical Examiner's Office suggest that the victims died as "their skin was literally melted away." Autopsies are being conducted at Utopia facilities.

The last three bodies were discovered in the bedroom, cause of death unknown — but all three bodies were found "fused" together. The slogan "One Race" burnt into the wall over the bed suggests Teragen involvement.

A quick background check revealed that the apartment belonged to a Hector Guzman; the only thing on file was a discharge report from the Rashoud facility in Manhattan — suspected nova.

Investigation handed over to Project Utopia on 11/24/2007.

The Future Belongs to Us

Feeling disgusted Saxon? Not what you had in mind? See we're not just a bunch of psychos who love running around ripping people apart for no reason. We have a reason, it may not be a neat "goal" or MO, nothing you can hang on a plaque, but we have a reason. Wanna know why he did it, why Lash killed his family? Because he could, just like Utopia sends you to do its dirty work in Kashmir — or orders the killing of Slider. Tell me, Saxon, what's the difference between slaughtering baselines like Hector did and the wholesale massacre of novas in a war that doesn't matter? You could even call Lash a revolutionary.

What's the matter, cat got your tongue? Let me guess, you wanted to say something about trying to build a better world, a world free of violence, death, poverty. And then what?

Baselines have been killing each other for years, since the very beginning of their "civilization." Think that's going to change just because we whore ourselves to them? Remember your first days, back in Africa — they said "use novas to fight, it's better,



there will be less casualties," but what did you think? Did you think at all? Did you dare question your handlers, or have they burned their little T2M Code of Honor so deeply into your brain that you can't even think for yourself? Does that concept disgust you? It should.

What went through your mind the first time you saw another nova die? Or the second? Or the third? Think about what went through your mind when you saw your buddy Slag run through with spears. Here's a supposed "savior of humanity" bleeding into the ground because he was ordered to fight a meaningless little conflict, just so fat, beer-guzzling baselines with go-nowhere, middle management jobs could watch the fucking World Series or get the occasional piece of snatch or whatever. Imagine what he might have been, given time to master his abilities. Just think about what was lost in the name of some stupid-ass baseline feud. That's it, feel the rage.... What about Angie? Yeah, we know about Angie....

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CNN News report, 05/02/01

- Myung: "It's only been a few hours since the fighting resumed in Nigeria, part of the equatorial violence sweeping Western Africa, and already the world has been witness to the first use of nova "elites" in modern warfare. This morning saw the first clash between elites and members of Team Tomorrow dispatched to the area by the UN and Project Utopia. Although T2M was successful, they were not without their losses.

"T2M spokespersons reported in a news briefing moments ago that Angie O'Connor, better known as Luna, was among the casualties. According to reports, she died during the fighting, and all attempts to recover her body have failed. T2M was unwilling to provide further information, but the Nigerian government is already painting a different account of her death...."

Makes you feel angry doesn't it...? Like you never really belonged.... Good, you're starting to see the light, but there's still much, much more to cover. You're right, even the cronies at Utopia know there is more to us....

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A Nova Nation

The time has come. It is clear that Utopia cannot control us much longer. Our time is at hand — freedom from baseline oppression and our dream of a nova nation are starting to become reality. Baseline atrocities toward novas must stop — the world has to realize that we are not guinea pigs. We are not commodities or resources — we are *Homo sapiens novus*! We are offering baselines a choice: Step aside, stop Utopia's pogrom against us, and acknowledge us as the One Race, or face our collective wrath. The Teragen speak for all novas. To those blessed with eruption — this is the beginning of our age! We are no longer an offshoot of humanity but the beginning of a new, glorious race, a superior race. The One Race. Do we really want to share our gifts with the baselines or, worse, be controlled and manipulated by them? We speak now, but there will come a time when words are no longer enough. The tide is turning; Utopia's festering underbelly is exposed, and the world must see who is really pulling the strings and why novas have to band together. Rashoud facilities sprouting up everywhere — why should someone granted the power of a nova be subjected to baseline prodding and conditioning? Utopia is so scared that we are really monsters that, in the process of trying to breed it out of us, they are creating true aberrations. We, the Teragen, are only being honest about what, and who, we are. It is time novas started learning the truth. Taint is not an abomination but a gift and our salvation. There will come a time when we can no longer co-exists with the baseline rabble. We have to be prepared, take the steps necessary, so when the Great Conflict is upon us, we'll be ready. Utopia is deluding itself in thinking it can "control" things, direct them. Nature is uncontrollable; terraforming Ethiopia is one thing, stopping novas from evolving is another. We are not terrorists or mercenaries; we are patriots — not to a single country or corpora-

tion but to novas, to a nova nation. Our nation is not some piece of land — what is a pile of earth when we have the potential to move mountains? We are Legion and our nations are our very own bodies, our identity as novas, but there are those who balk at the idea. Even worse, there are those who wish to quash our potential, to leave us broken and used. And the travesty of it all is that some of these culprits are other novas, those whom Utopia has blinded, duped and poisoned. Remember, someone must watch the watchers....

The Next Generation

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Saxon....Wake up.... I'm not done with you yet. Never thought of you as such a wimp... No wonder Angie got wasted. Look around you, at the monitors in front of you.... See those, those children are our future. Kids? What'd you expect, some sort of death ray or dimensional portal to hell? Why, when there is unlimited potential with those not fettered by human weakness...? Right Saxon, those are not normal kids.... I bet you're wondering how, must be thinking "What I am doing wrong — gone to the fertility clinic, maybe it's because Andrea is baseline?" Nope, you just don't have what it takes. But them? They're our future. Imagine the potential of a nova born nova — no need to "learn" quantum manipulation, they just know. Are you scared yet? It should be dawning on you about now that you'll never make it out of here alive, now that you know. But that's not what's bothering you. No. It's the fact that, 10 or 20 years from now, these marvels are going to make Mal look like a chump. Well, maybe not Mal.... And how do you think they'll feel toward baselines? It's so refreshing to see panic in those glowing eyes of yours. Do you think they'll only want to eradicate baselines — what guilt do those fears stem from, Saxon? Wait until the baselines discover our children — their worst fears confirmed. I can't wait... and people thought the explosion of the *Galatea* was cause for panic....

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There, that should keep you busy through the night. I'll be back tomorrow, not that you'll be anything more than a vegetable....

The Second Day: Ideological Conflicts

Morning, Saxon. Have a good night? Shush now, quit screaming a second. I know your mind's all scrambled now, different things popping up without you wanting them to. That's just how he wants you. Just how who wants you? Well, remember, I said I'd never sell you out to a baseline? Well, I wasn't lying, the guy who bought you up is pure nova. His name's Turncoat, and he wants to get into your head. Oh, look, here comes your new friend now....

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:::ACCESS REQUEST FROM INDIVIDUAL "TURNCOAT"
:::ACCEPT ? [Y/N]
\\y
\\Shut down systems.
:::MAINTAIN EMERGENCY LIGHTS? [Y/N]
\\y
:::MAINTAIN AUDIO LOG? [Y/N]
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\\Open Hatch
:::OPEN. ACCESS INDIVIDUAL "TURNCOAT"
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They lie to you, you know. All of them. How long have you worked for Utopia, Saxon? Eight years, if I remember my briefings. Team leader of T2M Europe until just a few months

ago, if I remember my trivia correctly. "Aye-aye, sir! On the double, sir! Gotta love the Navy...." Oh, sorry, just being a few people along the way. Can't be myself anymore, y'know. Turncoat's everyone....

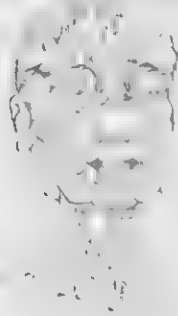
So, lying, yeah. I mean by now you've got to know that Utopia's lied to you since the beginning. They told you that you were just an extraordinary man, that you could have a life like everyone else's, just better. They didn't tell you that everything would continue to change. How those thoughts would come in the night, when you're lying on your baseline pet. "Oh, Saxon, yes... right there... yes! You're my God!" She was quite a hotty that one, wasn't she? Three times that night. Twice after she was dead. God that was good, I can feel it. Relax, Saxon. Don't fight me, there're no secrets here. This close, I can sense just where your neurons fire. See, then I get my brain to do it, and I am you — or at least your memories. See, I know about it all.... "Take it! Take it all!" Nasty way to get your kicks, big boy. I've heard of being a grower and not a shower, but that's taking it a bit far, don't you think? But I guess that's what Bangkok whores and PR cover-ups are for. But what you gotta know is that it's not only Utopia that lies. This fine little assemblage of novas can't tell the truth from their asses either.

See Mal set this up himself. "We are the gods of a godless age, and we can do as we see fit. Our mandate is not to follow orders but to make our own future and bury the past, under baseline bodies if need be." Y'know, he doesn't sound a thing like that, but that's what you think he's like, so I guess you can't tell. You like that "under baseline bodies" bit right? Take it all! Anyway, with people hearing that they can do whatever they want, you can bet there's some real problems in this little revolution.

Two Roads to Nowhere

So tell me Saxon, what do you think the Teragen is all about? I mean what does this movement want, where is it going? C'mon, Synapse force-fed you the party line all day yesterday, so spit it out. Not so easy to answer, is it? See, because of the way *The Null Manifesto* works, there's as many answers to that questions as there are Terats. I can hear them all right now.

Let's see.... Shrapnel would say something like, "The bloody monkeys have to know, in every cell of their little bodies, that we're above them." Meanwhile, you've got a guy called The Apostle saying, "The Teragen exist to reach enlightenment, an enlightenment provided by Divis Mal." So then Sin-Eater says, "The only enlightenment is in the beauty of the taint within us." See, no one agrees about what we're doing here. The thing is that Mal ain't around these days and he said that the Teragen had to decide what the hell it was. "Look within, and find the path that will lead our people to the glory that is their birthright. When you have found this path, I will be waiting along it." Very mysterious, very holy, very dangerous. So everyone's scrambling to find the path, and the two folks closest to Mal are sort of the front-runners for



Estimated Power Levels:

Strength: 3

Speed: 3

Offense: 4

Defense: 6

Versatility: 6

Bounty

Birth Name: Bene Manata

Date of Birth: July 22, 1979

Place of Origin: Near Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Occupation: Midwife and guardian

Archetype: Portent (second stage)

Powers: Bounty controls fertility and biological growth. She can compel plants to spontaneously grow in a specific way and accelerate animal gestation to an incredible speed. The only real limit on her abilities is that she cannot cause spontaneous fertilization (i.e. without intercourse) in sexual creatures. She has undergone the Chrysalis once, and her body is now covered with a delicate down of vines and moss.

Background: Bounty is the woman most directly responsible for ensuring the future of novas as a species. One of many Africans who came to Ethiopia to witness the miracle of terraformation, she was caught up in the process and erupted with unparalleled fertility powers.

ers. She joined Project Utopia and even became a student of Antaeus. Thanks to her powers, she discovered in 2005 that she and her fellow novas were being fed sterility drugs. With the declarations of *The Null Manifesto* fresh in her ears, she fled Addis Ababa and sought out the Teragen. Since then, she has established the most secretive of Teragen enclaves. Known as the Nursery, this hidden encampment in the jungle of her native Zaire is home to over a dozen infants born of nova parents: four of the children are Bounty's own Terats who wish to have children come to her to have their fertility restored, but their children must remain in the Nursery to grow up safe from baseline corruption and Utopian butchers.

Bounty supports making contact with the Aberrants. She and Antaeus had briefly been friends, and it was Bounty who first told him about possible sterilization programs.

deciding what's the right way. On one side you've got Scripture — he's a little bit pious priest, a little bit Albert Einstein and a little bit Sean Connery, with a dash of Hiroshima added in. "Matters of the spirit are primary in our quest for elevation. We must be free of the screech of baseline concerns, yes, but only so we can hear the callings of our own souls."

On the other side, you got The Mathematician. Think of a senile grandfather hardwired to a calculator, and you're close. "The numerical pattern of history, the never-ending fractal chain of cause and effect, points clearly toward disastrous baseline-nova conflict. We must have the political tools to defend against attack, respond to aggression and stand up to the world." See, one side's talking about setting the soul free. The other's talking about creating political tools, maybe even a nation for novas alone. That's how they see the world and how they see all conflicts.

Monkey Blood

See, the problem here is that neither Scripture nor the Mathematician really gets what's happening to "their" movement. It's been — what? — almost three years since *The Null Manifesto* hit the airwaves like so much flying dung on a fan, and we still haven't done much, not nearly as much as Utopia says we have. We'd be busy little novas to cause that much damage. I can hear what you're thinking. That's not what they say on *Nightline*, right? There was that woman from Tampa on a few weeks ago.... "They killed Mayor Rupert because he spoke out. They bomb schools in Texas and kill people in India by the boatload. Meanwhile, we wait for Utopia to stop them. Are we going to have to see more children die before the administration acts against the Teragen? When faced with a mad dog, you kill it and kill it fast." Lovely woman, really good at getting campaign contributions. Future President, maybe.

Truth is, the Teragen haven't done much blowing up of anything. Sure Tampa, sure a few other things, but it's nothing like what could be done. "These terrorists are novas, soldier. Figure it out. They can level a battleship if they so choose." The general is right, we could. Or a jetliner or a shopping mall or a whole city. So far, most Terats have waited, but that's coming to an end. Already, you got folks like Nova Vigilance and the Primacy facing off against you in T2M and striking some Utopia holdings. They want to take it further, and I doubt anyone can stop them. The Harvesters are even worse. They're the Terats who live up to all the press about novas being inhuman monstrosities. They've got their own spiritualism, and it ain't pretty. They've got this old fart Zia heading them up. Real nice man. "It is time for us to accept the power of taint and evolution and to forsake all that is human in us. Horror and revulsion among the baselines is only an indication that they have recognized that which will eventually destroy and replace them. Their screaming only illustrates how glorious the world will be without them in it." Sweet, huh?



Estimated Power Levels:

Strength: 3
Intellect: 5
Speed: 4
Offense: 5
Defense: 5
Versatility: 8

Turncoat

Birth Name: Jesse Hooks
Date of Birth: July 12, 1984
Place of Origin: Chattanooga, TN
Occupation: Former Directive agent
Archetype: None (first stage)
Powers: Turncoat is a masterful physical and mental chameleon. His shapeshifting is limited to changing his features and build, but he may also alter his anima to match a target's. His mental transformations are far more profound, through a subtle form of mind reading, he can read and duplicate the brain chemistry of another. He can literally become that person, relive her memories or perfectly match her expectations of a third party.

Background: US Navy Seaman Jesse Hooks erupted at sea in 2003 when a rogue elite attacked his vessel. In the ensuing panic he became everything that anyone wanted him to be. Soon, he was transferred from the Navy into

the Directive's hands, becoming the perfect infiltrator. After several successful deep infiltration operations against foreign governments (and one long foray into Project Utopia), Hooks received the mission of infiltrating the Teragen.

The Directive was unaware, however, that Hooks was suffering from a growing case of Multiple Personality Disorder. So complete were his transformations that he was slowly losing track of which persona was his own. Soon enough there were three or four Terat personalities vying for control of his psyche, and after filing a few reports, he apparently turned against the Directive. The only thing that maintains his sanity is a specialized neurotransmitter antagonist drug produced by The Apostle, a fact that effectively makes him a tool of the Cult of Mal. Somewhere in his psyche, one of them, anyway, Hooks is still loyal to the Directive, but that voice gets fainter every day.

Egomania Unleashed

The big thing is that these are novas we're talking about. What is it those Church of Michael hicks say? "Them aberrants ain't nothing but devils. They're like junkies outta control, each'un with the power of a regiment. They gotta be stopped." You know as well as I do that those backwater cow-suckers are dead on right. You, me and every other bastard with a lump of node in his brain, we're little kids turned into gods. We do what we want to make ourselves happy. Sure, for the two of us, that was serving God and country for a while. Aye-aye, sir! But then, it became full-contact stuff for you and screwing up minds for me. The Teragen is just like that too, everyone in it thinks they're a big deal. There are no factions and movements, any more than there are in fashion or the intelligence game. It's all about stroking egos and getting yours stroked. Whoever gets the most mental handjobs wins in this game. "You're my God!" Remember? Hell, there's even a bunch of wackos who think Mal is some sort of Second Coming. Speak of the devil....

:::ACCESS REQUEST FROM INDIVIDUAL "THE APOSTLE."

:::ACCEPT? [Y/N]

\\y

:::ACCESS INDIVIDUAL "THE APOSTLE."

Thank you, Synapse. I see he is well prepared, Turncoat. Thank you very much. I'll deal with him from here.

[sigh]

Hello, Saxon. You do not look comfortable at all, let me help you. Yes, those are my hairs piercing your rough skin, but do not concern yourself. Look into my eyes and let me take the pain away. Yes, feel the effects of the painkillers I have unleashed into your bloodstream. Yes, that's it.... You see, we may bring pleasure as well as pain. Our schizophrenic Mister Hooks here has learned to appreciate my pharmacological gift, as it allows him to suppress the many personalities which evolve in his brain. For you, I can make all the pain stop. You do not accept your own divinity, you do not understand the gift that Mal has awakened us to. Do not worry, you will soon forget.

Yes, my secretions are working. Your memories of pain are vanishing. The prostitutes' cracking bodies will trouble you no more. Yes, your actions in Kashmir, they too are gone. So many dismembered civilians, how quaint that you still feel guilt. Ah yes, the novas you have brought to justice, including some of our own private kills. All forgotten. Do not worry, Mister Hooks has been in your mind, he will remember all that you are until the day he dies, the poor thing. Yes, a blank slate now. Now there is one phrase you must remember. Repeat after me, yes that's it. "Mal is my savior...." Yes....

The Teragen Today: Status Flux

Private letter to Divls Mal, from Scripture, his companion

You asked if I could prepare an update on the Teragen for when you emerged from Chrysalis. The mood I'm in now is contemplative enough for that. I don't think you will like my observations. Writing this letter makes me think of you and how I miss your company. Hm. I'd best write before I grow maudlin. Terat existence is not one of spontaneous creation from the ether. Most novas were once baselines, and despite our interminable avowals of transcendence, we remain anchored to our experiences of baseline infancy. We are not immune to the effects of early imprinting; conditioning shapes our morals, tastes, outlooks and personalities as much as it does any other beasts' or baselines'. Certainly, eruption brings out hidden qualities and unrealized desires within each of us, but again, both manifestations of abilities and new ambitions still stem from mundane roots. Since *The Null Manifesto*, we've been trying to guide the erupted toward a new understanding of what it means to be a nova, particularly the more complex ramifications of being something other than baseline. In essence, a lifetime of conditioning has been pitted against the three scant years of self-exploration brought on by the manifesto; one will give over to the other, but it will take time. Three years is not much time in a quest for enlightenment. It is less when those to be enlightened are behaving like children,

drunk on their own power. They rebel for the joy of rebelling. They kill because they can. They believe that monstrosity qua monstrosity is a virtue unto itself.

It is not unfair to describe a large minority of Terats as cruel, immature, power hungry and lacking in insight. As their adoptive fathers, we have a great deal of work to do. Should we discipline them now or assume that this is a phase they'll grow out of? I know how you seek equals, my dear Michael, others who can be trusted, befriended, relied upon, but most of the fools who call themselves Terats are not equal to that challenge. Not yet, at any rate. The movement is still defining itself by baseline standards. Some of us recognize this for the hypocrisy it is. For the time being, however, until the Chrysalis alters personal and global perception, most Terats will have to rely on their baseline experiences to see them through this evolution. Unfortunately, with baseline perceptions come baseline hatreds and shortcomings. Most Terats are still strutting around, displaying their power to the baselines. It's very *nouveau riche* of them, but it was predictable. In time, they should grow out of it. Following the discovery of superiority comes a need to seek out like-minded peers. No one knows this as well as you, I know.

Novus, by and large, has the same social needs as *sapiens*. As such, we form nebulous groups, cliques and movements that best capture our newfound direction in life. Many groups, like the Teragen, are in their infancy, still exploring their world through baseline-colored glasses and baseline-developed minds. The strongest personality at any given gathering often sways the opinions of other members. There is no set organization to the membership or its intermediate hierarchy (though, admittedly, this also stems from your essential credo of "find your own way"); as such, Terats are free to associate with and move between the various movements within the Teragen. Rarely is a member-to-group marriage a monogamous endeavor.

The Teragen at this point hosts a library of agendas. To many, it is a vehicle for self-deification or the basis for a globe-spanning household, a true nuclear family, if you will. For others, the Teragen is a cult, worshiping novas in general and you in particular. Political aspirations and transcendent superiority both have strong voices within the movement, though, as you will see later, strong voices tend drown each other out.

This overexcited multitude of voices is the primary source of instability within the Teragen. It breeds internal jealousy and conflict that do our cause no good. Where once we all eagerly accepted the differences and shared ground between political and spiritual agendas, each side now treats the other as alien or heretical. Some groups are actively recruiting members into their fold and demanding political fealty. The Teragen is undergoing its own Chrysalis, scraping away the poseurs and groupies, and trying to turn itself into a force of reckoning. Surgery, however, invariably draws blood. You are their father. They need discipline.

I'm sorry to convey such dreary sentiments, but this is the truth I see. I've not slept for the past three months, because the children have been crying. That might have everything to do with the tone of this letter. Hopefully I will be around (and in a better frame of mind) when you return to read this. Perhaps then I can offer you insights that mere words on paper cannot.

With Infinite Passion,

— JS

A Nova Pantheon

Transcript of meeting between Terat Giuseppe "Sloppy Joe" Bennatti and Aberrant Sophia Rousseau, May 31, 2008

- Sloppy Joe: I ain't happy about this. I like the Terats, I ain't got nothing against them.
- Sophia Rousseau: I understand that Giuseppe....
- Sloppy Joe: It's Sloppy Joe, alright. Giuseppe died when he turned into a puddle of fuckin' gool!
- Rousseau: You're right, I'm sorry. The fact remains, however, that this exchange of information is mutually beneficial.
- Sloppy Joe: Jeez lady, I may look like crap, but that don't mean you can stuff more up my hole. You Aberrants want the goods on the Teragen? Fine! I just want that cure you promised. Looking like dog diarrhea ain't as glamorous as you think it is.
- Rousseau: The cure is forthcoming Giuse— Sloppy Joe, but we need you in the Teragen for a while longer. We have to know if they pose a....
- Sloppy Joe: Yeah! Yeah! A threat, I know. What d'ya want with me today?
- Rousseau: Well, I'd like a rundown on their organization for starters. You never

supplied us with any detailed insight into Teragen hierarchy.

- Sloppy Joe: Know why? Because there ain't none. It's a screwed-up leadership. Take the Greek gods and put them on Springer. It gets real nasty after that.

- Rousseau: Explain.

- Sloppy Joe: [Gurgling sigh] For Christ's sake!

- Rousseau: Please. Indulge me?

- Sloppy Joe: Alright, alright! Everybody knows that when Divis spit out *The Null Manifesto*, he attracted all these groupies and took over the Teragen, right? What people don't know about is the Chrysalis thingy that he brings with him. Mal's talking transcendence and equality, and he ain't bluffing. He'd already gone through the Chrysalis three times by then. At that point, the Teragen were a bunch of coffee-shop anarchists, talking revolution over lattes, but Mal rides in and makes a clean sweep of it all. So now you got the old guard — with Pedro Santiago, Raoul Orzaiz, Marcel Delorimier and Caroline Fong — and the new guard — with Scripture and Divis Mal — facing each other like two virgins on a date. Everybody's quiet for a while. Suddenly, word gets around that Divis Mal's hanging out with the Teragen, and that makes them cool. Every loser and hanger-on flocks to the Teragen, and the old guard figures, "Hey, this ain't half bad." Now Mal's got real power. He says equality, so everybody's equal; he says behave, and everybody does. With that much pull, he's head of the family. He rants and raves about a new race and how we aren't just novas, we're gods; y'know, Hitler speeches. So now we're gods, but we're still a family, right? Starts getting really Greek here.

- Rousseau: I already know all this. Let's approach this from another angle. I'll ask a specific question, and you tell me what you know. If I've missed anything of importance, feel free to share that with me. Is that clearer?

- Sloppy Joe: Couldn't tell you sister. My eyes are staring at my spleen right now, but I get you. Fire away.

Pantheon Structure

Encoded OpNet Audio Message

From: Sophia Rousseau

To: Meztiszo

Subject: Teragen Agent Debriefing

This is going to be a headache, I can tell. My session with our mole concluded as well as can be expected, but I have far more ques-



tions than when I began. Enclosed herein is an abridged version of the debriefing with personal assessments already included: The distinction between family and Pantheon among the Teragen is a thin one, for neither definition truly captures the essence of their hierarchy. Amalgamate the two words, however, and we begin to understand how the Teragen function — comparing them to an assemblage of Greek gods hardly seems inappropriate. With the exception of Divis Mal, whose role is both that of father figure and godhead, and Jeremiah Scripture, whose role is nebulous, the remainder of the Pantheon members are equal in power. There is neither a military-style command system nor a pyramidal power structure, as is common in cults. Instead, Pantheon members fall around Divis Mal's bull's-eye like arrows fired from a novice archer. Some members are closer to Mal than others, but all are within range to score points. While this alleged equality is fine on paper, in truth there are recognized levels of authority, where one member might defer to another. From what I understand, there are three strata of status, and they all relate to the significance the Teragen impart on the Chrysalis, the taint-induced metamorphosis they engage in. Scattered on the outside ring of the bull's-eye are those who have not undergone Chrysalis yet. The Teragen do not look down or frown upon these members because the decision to change must be a willing choice (I am still unfamiliar with the entire Chrysalis process, so beyond this, I cannot provide further enlightenment). Some of these novas, however, like Orzaiz, are still powerful, charismatic or influential enough to be part of the Pantheon. The second stratum is made up of those who have undergone the Chrysalis once, placing them closer to Mal in experience. These individuals compose the bulk of the Pantheon because of the respect others afford them. Undergoing the Chrysalis means many things to the Teragen, but most of it represents a commitment to become greater than human. It is a rite of passage and a sure bet in winning a cadre of idolizing followers, poseurs and admirers. The third stratum is composed of those who have undergone the Chrysalis more than once (which, I believe, is a rare thing).

The Teragen movement respects but fears these Pantheon members, partially because they look and act extremely alien, and partially because they are closer to Divis Mal in understanding than anyone else. These individuals are equal members of the Teragen family, but while the second stratum attracts followers from the first, those of the third are sages or oracles for everyone below them. Their words carry more weight, and their passage is enough to spark quiet awe. Our agent seems confident that Scripture and The Mathematician (whom I've discussed in previous reports) are part of this upper stratum. They are apparently still the equals of other Terats, but their experiences afford them far more credibility.

Perhaps undergoing multiple Chrysalises does to the Teragen what appears to have happened to Mal: alienation from reality or, at least, from humanity. I think Scripture and Mal can communicate with one another because they are closer in experience, but they have difficulties relating to others because they lack common frames of reference. I suppose it's like explaining the concept of space to somebody who perceives reality in two dimensions.

Membership: A Family Snapshot

Transcript of phone tap; Nova-Express Caterers; June 1, 2008

Notes from Supervising Agent: First speaker is Anatole Siervich, a caterer who works most nova-run functions. He's a suspected Teragen sympathizer, which is why we tapped his phone. Second speaker is probably Eric Ballard, a suspected Teragen sympathizer and host for visiting Teragen dignitaries. While the Utopia tap was unable to discern the actual meeting location, the following conversation reveals some interesting tidbits about the Teragen hierarchy.

[phone rings]

- Siervich: Nova-Express. We cater your parties with an eruption of good taste.
- Ballard: [laughs] I never get tired of hearing that, y'know.
- Siervich: Ah, there you are. You're a difficult man to reach. How are the preparations?
- Ballard: That's why I'm calling. We need to go over a few details. Got the seating arrangements for the dinner. Think *The Last Supper*, with chair seating from left to right.
- Siervich: Excellent!
- Ballard: Scripture, Marcel Delorimier and Bounty are at the left end of the table: spots one, two and three.





• Siervich: Are you certain? I can understand seating Delorimier or Bounty there. They aren't as respected as some members. But Scripture? He carries the word of Mal.

• Ballard: Discussed it with Scripture already. He doesn't mind. 'Sides, none of them eat meat. If it was sentient once, Scripture can hear the food screaming. Bounty's vegan, so nothing produced by animals for her — including milk and cheese. Marcel follows Scripture wherever he goes, so he's probably used to eating vegan anyway. Marcel and Bounty want to be as far from Leviathan as possible.

• Siervich: I suppose I could serve them Pesto alla Genovese over no-egg fettucine. I'll drop the sardo romano for Bounty. What about gnocchi verde — spinach dumplings — as appetizer?

• Ballard: Fine, just no meat, eggs or cheese. Next up, at four, we got Narcosis, then—

• Siervich: Pardon, umm, I'm not telling you how to do your job, but even I know Narcosis and Delorimier are rivals.

• Ballard: But not enemies. I can't switch her with Zia; that'll put her too close to Sin-Eater. Narcosis and Sin-Eater aren't on the best of terms. Besides. I move Sin-Eater, and Leviathan follows. The two have been pretty close recently.

• Siervich: Really? I did not know that!

• Ballard: You didn't hear it from me either. Narcosis stays at four, with Geryon at five. They're at the same level of influence, and they're both glory sluts, so it should be interesting. Next up is Swarm Queen at six with Count Orzaiz at seven.

• Siervich: Excellent choice. Those two always seemed like good friends. The count asked me to prepare a special plate for him. Piselli al Prosciutto to start, followed by Pollo alla Diavola with extra-protein sauce. I'll make it for Swarm Queen as well.

• Ballard: Sounds fine. After that is the empty chair in honor of Mal, followed by Pedro Santiago at number nine. Oh, that reminds me. Were you planning to make something called "Supple Teflon?"

• Siervich: What? Oh! No, no, its Suppli al Telefono: fried rice-and-cheese balls.

• Ballard: Don't. Pedro says the cheese is already spoiled. You were going to give everyone food poisoning. Now, next up we have Shrapnel at ten. Pedro likes her, so I guess it's okay. After that, it's Tarik something or other.

• Siervich: ibn'Mahmoud. He requested I make lahm'bayjeen. Do you know what that is?

• Ballard: Nope, but he's representing our entire Middle East operation. I suggest you make him happy. He's got clout and money. Get this, he even dropped me a few grand to get seated next to Zia. I think he wants to talk business or something.

• Siervich: Fine. So The Apothecary — Zia — is next to Tarik. Do you think he'll like the menu?

• Ballard: Haven't heard any complaints from him, but he's always quiet in a disapproving way. After that, it's The Confederate.

• Siervich: The Confederate?

• Ballard: Yeah, he's making a name for himself, and some of the Pantheon wanted to meet him. He's sort of filling in for Epoch. That wacko should have been there, but he said he wanted to hunt for his food. Something about liking game meat. I think it's because he can't eat through that mask without busting his cool. I don't like the guy. Don't think anybody does.

• Siervich: Yes, regardless, that makes three men in a row. Can't we reshuffle things for a more elegant seating? Maybe something alternating male and female? I can fax you some possible set-ups....

• Ballard: Hey, who's paying your bills here? I got people where I want 'em, understand? Just pretend Zia's got tits and shut up about it! Got it?

• Siervich: Ahem! Well then, what shall I serve The Confederate.

• Ballard: Make it simple. He's a meat-and-potatoes man. Down-home cooking you understand. After that it's Sin-Eater.

• Siervich: Sitting outside her station, isn't she?

• Ballard: Hey, she helped me get rid of some nasty-ass taint a few times. She gets to sit where she wants, and she wants to sit next to Leviathan.

• Siervich: I don't understand why. His wet-stench must be stifling, not to mention the 100 pounds of raw shrimp that he requested.

• Ballard: Yeah, well that's why I got him sitting as far from Scripture as possible. Think you can handle that?

• Siervich: Yes. That should be fine. I'll arrange the rest of the menu around your instructions.

- Ballard: Great, I'll talk to you later then. *Ciao*.
 - Siervich: Bye.
- [call ends]

Notable Factions and Cliques

Transcript of Teragen Meeting, Day Two: June 4, 2008, Location Unknown

- Count Raoul Orzaiz: Pedro has asked that I start today's discussions. We've all been relaxing so far, catching up with fellow Terats we haven't seen in months and meeting newcomers to the movement, but the time has now come to get serious. We need to know just what the Teragen is, who we are and what we are going to do. As things stand, we're making powerful enemies for no particular reason.

- Angela "Narcosis" de la Cruz: Well, this hardly seems to be all of us. You say yourselves that there're 50 or more Terats, though I suspect there are many more of us than that. Isn't this about making our own rules and being equals? So where's the rest of the movement? Why only this little "Pantheon"?

- Allison "Shrapnel" Hughes: Bloody hell! If we get everyone together in one room, we'll just be screaming at each other. Some of us have put in our dues for the movement, so we get to speak up. It's time we got organized.

- Leviathan: You realize, right, that goes against the manifesto?

- Jeremiah Scripture: Not entirely. Divis' message was that we must build our own relations, and that is what today is all about. Allison is right, in that we needed a manageable size for this discourse, and we all know that those of us here have influence with most of the others. Whether we admit it or not, they look to us for guidance or, at least, an example to follow. We group together in cliques, and if we are to move forward, we must at least recognize that these cliques exist.

- Orzaiz: On that note, I think we should get started. Shrapnel you seem eager to move forward, so why don't you go first?

The Primacy

Primacy pamphlet circulating among novas, summer 2007

The world came to the brink of destruction and anarchy due to the inaction, incompetence and general malaise of baselines. It was novas who cleaned up society and inspired this supposed golden age for mankind — this Nova Age. The Primacy is disgusted by the way novas have been used as common workhorses for the benefit of baselines who did little to save themselves. If baselines want novas to save the world, then they should allow novas to rule. Natural selection has already spoken; now baseline society must change to acknowledge what everyone knows to be true: Novas must take charge.

- Shrapnel: We know who we are and why we are gathered here today. We all call ourselves Teragen, but it is time we took action to let the world know what we really stand for. The monkeys have had it good; Utopia feeds them lies and they lap it up while atrocities, notably nova deaths, occur in the name of progress. When I was young I fought for God, Queen and Country, but now, I realize we are that "God" that "Queen" and that "Country." I don't expect you all to understand, but monkeys used me like a tool — an object — and I want to teach them a lesson or two in just who has the power in this relationship.

- Pedro "The Mathematician" Santiago: But that could place us all in jeopardy; we already have Utopia and T2M after us — and little revolutionary displays like yours only portray us as thugs and terrorists....

- Shrapnel: And all the while, more of us are dying in Kashmir, in Africa, in the thousand little wars that Utopia has rigged to kill us off, but then again, what would you know about dying — cloistered away in your office? That's not a tactic the rest of us can stomach. We can't hide anymore.

• Barry "The Confederate" Meldrum: She's right, the Teragen has got to lead the way. There are more and more novas erupting every day; sooner or later, Utopia is going to panic, and by that point, it'll be too late. The more we skulk in the shadows, keeping the kid gloves on, the weaker we'll become. Look, it's happening already; we call ourselves brothers — the One Race — but we're growing divided. We all know that we're superior, right? Our gathering here proves it. Look around, we are the future, but unless we start acting, we stand to lose it all.

The One Race

- Marcel "The Apostle" Delorimier: Why "Primacy"?
- Confederate: Listen, we're the One Race. Not only do we not belong with the rabble out there, we're better: smarter, stronger and faster; in a word, superior. We should lead.... What have the baselines ever accomplished besides bloodshed and injustice? Look around, the meek have inherited the Earth. That's a damned unnatural state of affairs if you ask me. It's time to win it back, don't you think?
- Altaz "The Apothecary" Zia: What do you and the Primacy propose?
- Confederate: That we should step up and show everyone that we're the ascendant species on this planet. It's a new age, the Nova Age, time to demonstrate to the world that we're not lap dogs, freaks or slaves, but the One Race. Hence the Primacy. Mal said so in the manifesto, and while I agree that to each his own, unless we fight, we'll never get the chance to achieve our destiny — our natural and biological right to be the dominant force on this planet. How many are we, not just in this room, but in the world — 6,000? 7,000? We're an endangered species for Christ's sake — aside from us, no novas have reproduced, and every day, more and more are dying.
- Narcosis: But killing all the baselines is not the answer....
- Confederate: Who's talking about killing all the baselines? What's the matter, you love them so much you can't stand loosing your legions of fans?
- Shrapnel: But if we must, then yes. It's come to this. The Rashoud facilities are sterilization clinics where butchers water down novas' potential and control them like cattle. Look at Africa and Kashmir, nova killing fields, and this is alright for the baselines. "Better them than us," they must be thinking. We have to change how baselines think of us, to break their brainwashed perception that we're martyrs and mindless heroes. And if it takes blood and tears, then that's what it takes.
- Orzaiz: Spoken like a true revolutionary, but the more you fight, Shrapnel, the more villainous you become in their eyes. Freedom fighter, terrorist, what's the difference?
- Mathematician: And by continuing your supremacist agenda, Allison, you are just feeding into their stereotypes of us. Is that wise?
- Shrapnel: Wise or not, it's what must be done — words alone don't do the trick anymore. This is why we must work together; we have to go after Utopia and Triton, not to mention this Aeon Society. I think it's what Mal would like us to do. Utopia is hurting right now, the whole Slider scandal—
- Tarik ibn'Mahmoud: Which, thanks to actions like yours, the media was quick to blame on us....
- Confederate: Meaning they're afraid of us. You've been hiding too long in the desert, friend, to see it. Utopia and T2M are worried, let them turn their propaganda machine against us; we'll use it to show the world the real underbelly of Utopia.
- Shrapnel: The more we provoke Utopia, the more they'll blunder. We have to go after them where it hurts, force them to become fanatical in their opposition to us. I think we can use Slider's death to our advantage. If, somehow, we could turn the tables, we could start showing the world what skeletons lie in Utopia's closet. And the key to this is Corbin and the Aberrants.

Excerpt from encoded message; May 30, 2008

Feathered Serpent,

You wanted to me to write up a report after my meeting with Meztiszo, so here are my preliminary findings. Although Meztiszo was reluctant to arrange a meeting between Corbin and myself, he did seem at least open to the idea of increased ties between our two groups. As he put it: "Any enemy of Utopia, is at least a potential ally to us." Now, whether the rest of the Aberrants feel the

same way is another question. The meeting did bring up a couple of interesting points — we are correct that the best group to approach the Aberrants is the Primacy. While you know my feelings regarding Shrapnel's increased fanaticism and her racial purity theories, the idea of fighting the corruption of Utopia might be appealing to some Aberrants — Meztiszo included. You were able to turn me around by showing me the lies of Utopia; I am sure you and the rest of the Primacy can win the hearts and minds of the Aberrants. And what better group to function in the name of our cause? They still cling to their baseline identities; they could help us bridge the gap. I fear, however, that some among our number would only use them, and this a potential problem. I do have to question some of the ties the Primacy has among the Teragen. While you know my loyalty to the "family" and Mal, I feel that some of our members are a detriment to the movement. People like Zia, Delorimier, Epoch and Tarik should be kept as far away from Corbin and his Aberrants as possible. You'll have a full report when we meet in a couple of days.

La Primera Raza!

— Matador

Viva La Revolución!

- Scripture: So where are the rest of your compatriots?
- Shrapnel: In the field. I told you: The time to sit back is over, and we've got to prepare for the coming storm. Don't hide, Pedro, you know what I'm talking about. It's only a matter of time before we cross the line — inaction will simply result in our slow deaths. You think your silence conceals your worries. It doesn't. What do you see in the future that paralyses you? Mal is right, it's time to act.

- Tarik: You act like a simple bunch of malcontents — no pun intended. You talk about revolution, of fighting Utopia, but what will that get us? A nova nation, so we can worry about budgets and the like. I say, let the baselines cower before Utopia. They are easier to control that way....

- Natalya "Swarm Queen" Dornova: There is only one way to control baselines, through fear and submission. Sooner or later, the monkeys are going to feel our power, not just in isolated bombings and kidnappings, and then they'll see the writing on the wall — written in their blood. We have to eliminate the Project and the world governments. If we don't act now, the Directive is going to make Utopia look like a fieldtrip. We also have to strike at Bahrain while we have the chance. It should be one of our first targets — especially if Caroline Fong is still alive.

- Apostle: I have to side with Tarik, he knows the situation in the Middle East the best. We strike at Bahrain and Utopia will descend on us. Besides, even if we show the world that concentration camp, I doubt they would act.



Estimated Power Levels

Strength: 4
Intellect: 5
Speed: 6
Offense: 7
Defense: 5
Versatility: 6

Shrapnel

Birth Name: Allison Hughes

Date of Birth: April 8 1983

Place of Origin: Belfast, Northern Ireland

Occupation: Leader of the Primacy, former elite

Archetype: Monster (second stage), Marvel
before her last Chrysalis

Powers: Shrapnel's powers revolve around metal and concussive force. She is able to fly and can project shards of hot metal from her fingers, causing significant damage to anything she hits. Having emerged from the Chrysalis Shrapnel's control over her quantum abilities has increased — making her a creature of metal and energy rather than flesh and blood. While she can still "pull herself together" and take human form, she prefers her natural state.

Background: The so-called "Angel of Teras," Shrapnel is the leading advocate behind the Primacy. While smart and charismatic, even a visionary, Shrapnel most often lets her anger and outrage guide her actions. She knows a time of reckoning is at hand.

Allison erupted after a car bomb exploded outside her church in Belfast when she was 17. After

the explosion, unconscious and suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, Allison became a ward of the Crown. The British government wasted no time in training Shrapnel as an elite — to them she was a tool, a weapon, and nothing else. Unable to deal with her eruption and the tragedy of losing her family, Allison became withdrawn, and her only outlet was violence. Her treatment at the hands of the British military soured her views on baselines, probably permanently.

Shrapnel served in the Equatorial Wars, by which point she was a cold killer. She took great pleasure in tormenting the baselines she was supposedly sent to save. By 2002, she became disillusioned and went rogue, resulting in an immediate manhunt for her. While in hiding, she met and befriended Natalya "Swarm Queen" Dornova, another disillusioned elite. In the summer of 2003 Count Orzaiz offered both a membership in the nascent Teragen.

Shrapnel longed to end the violence, to return to her baseline innocence. However, everywhere she looked, novas were used and abused — the media lauded them as gods while the common man reaped the rewards. She was turned into a killer so that the monkeys wouldn't have to fight — what made their lives more valuable than hers? In 2005, when Mal issued *The Null Manifesto*, Shrapnel, Natalya and a cadre of other Terats went public and formed the Primacy — the time of the One Race was at hand.

Communiqué Intercepted, February 2008

For God's sake, Allison, listen to me. The Confederate is going too far. You know me, the movement is all I care about. I can even put up with the religious dogma of Scripture and The Apostle, but The Confederate is bad news. I know he's a patriot, we all are, but he insists on forging questionable alliances. I mean he's meddling with Sango in Nigeria if my contacts with the C-Z are right. What's he doing there? Sango is a bloody baseline. I know you're close to Meldrum, but sister, please keep an eye on him. Seems everywhere he goes, a massacre follows. How many has he killed, not just baseline, but nova? Exterminating baselines is not the key. I know you hate them. I see it in your face, in your speeches. "Racial purity," sounds like the Nazis. They have to be taught a lesson, but I wonder if we are going too far? I realize that Bahrain must fall and that Tarik is blocking us, but what can Sango get us that we can't get ourselves — besides genocide?

Be careful,
— Natalya

Club Zmei

Noted Teragen Member Escapes

(Associated Press, April 19, 2009): In a press release this morning, Utopia admitted that Sluice, convicted criminal and known Teragen sympathizer, escaped from one of their security facilities. Leland Cornwall, a Utopia telepath, is also missing, though authorities are unable to determine if Leland was a victim or an accomplice.

Private letter from Swarm Queen to Sluice:

Hope this gets to you. Nice to see you in the outside world, good job on Leland. I hope the papers served you well, by now you should be en route to St. Petersburg. Too bad you'll miss the meeting, but Shrapnel and the others thought it would be better if you hung low for a while. After all, Utopia is busy looking for you; can't wait to hear what goods you have on them. And to think they actually believe they "captured" you. Monkeys.... Club Zmei should be to your liking; it's nice and secluded. Kinda out of the way in one of the oldest sections of St. Petersburg. I think it was even a morgue of some kind during WW II. I am sure the old building has seen its fair share of revolutions and violence. I like places with history. The club itself takes up most of the place. Nothing much, think of it like an industrial hive — they don't call me Swarm Queen for nothing. The upper floors house apartments, home to a small commune of local artists and "revolutionaries" fighting the "evil" of Sierka. Most of these are under my sway and act as watchdogs and gophers. Call it a weakness, but I like how they dote over me — every queen needs her subjects. If you need anything, ask Mikhail. You could call him my manservant. He's trustworthy and knows if he ever did something to upset me, there is no place in the world he could hide. The basement is where you'll be staying, the real safe house. The backrooms should carry some history for the movement; it is here where the Primacy first gathered. It was really Shrapnel and me at the time, a couple of hardened elites tired of the massacres down in Africa. Orzaiz walked in one day and showed us the way, and we followed. Funny how Shrapnel resents him, it's almost like she blames him for being what she is. It was his idea to turn the building into a club. During the day, it's pretty quiet. That'll allow you to get accustomed to the outside world. How long were you gone for? A year? You'll find a suitable reference library and computer room, all furnished by Synapse, who somehow managed to hack into the local Directive network. Rifle through their datafiles, you're bound to find something interesting. I know you are not predisposed to baselines, but they make great cover, and after all, I do need to make some cash. They crawl in throughout the afternoon, ready to drown baseline nihilism and anarchy in vodka. The club also opened ties between the Camparelli-Zukhov boys and me. They watch over the club, and in return, I do a few favors for them. A good agreement that ensures Zmei remains in the shadows of Sierka's Russia, far from the clutches of Utopia. See you after the meeting....

— Swarm Queen

The Companions

• Scripture: The Primacy is a strong example of the direct approach to achieving our collective aims, but there are other approaches. I think our friends from the Fertile Crescent have demonstrated the power of subtlety most effectively. Tarik, I hope you'll indulge me for a moment?

• Tarik: Of course, good sir, of course.

• Scripture: Two years ago, I was part of a Middle-Eastern mission to bring Terat justice to the murderers of Ayatollah Sa'ati. As you well know, it was not the murder that disturbed us but the blame outsiders laid at our feet for that action. Our investigation concluded only because Tarik ibn'Mahmoud was there to help solve the mystery. Since his introduction two years ago, Tarik has expanded our sphere of influence within the region, granting us political freedom we could never have gained in so short a time without him. Tarik?

• Tarik: Ah well, what more could I say with so eloquent an introduction?

• James "Geryon" Booth: Can we move this along?

• Orzaiz: Manners my friend, manners. Tarik expects a certain respect and hospitality that I think befits us all.

• Tarik: Your dignity humbles me, Count Orzaiz. Thank you. I hope the distinguished assembly has had the opportunity to read over my notes? It will help you understand the position I and other Arabic novas are in.

• Synapse: Christ, you mean there was homework? Are we getting tested on this?

• Orzaiz: Synapse, please....

The Situation in the Middle-East

All Middle-Eastern tales begin with "There was, there was not...." This introduction, while appropriate for the dichotomous Islamic people, belies the true tension tearing the region apart. To understand your Arabic Terat brethren and sisters, you must understand their situation. The stability of the Middle East is shattered. The introduction of the hypercombustion engine, while a godsend for the environment, broke the economic back of Saudi Arabia, Iran and Kuwait. Although the new technology extends oil reserves into the distant future, it does so by slashing the current demand. In short, the once wealthy nations of OPEC have seen their profits vanish. This, in turn, has created dire circumstances in the already turbulent Middle East. Religious extremists, who have long seen oil as the pipeline of Western decadence, are now trying to bring their countries back to a pure Islamic regime. Governments, regardless of their religious obligations, know full well that their nations have to survive on the global market. Iran's fall to Ayatollah Khomeini 40 years ago proved a nation cannot remain in isolation without its people suffering. These differing views, unfortunately, have set up power struggles in Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt, where religion and politics clash, often violently. Already, Arabia is split into minor principalities ruled by the king's sons. Some carry Islam in their scabbard while others use Western influence to maintain their fleeting hold over the less crucial eastern oilfields. A handful of countries, like Bahrain, have become Utopian lackeys to supplement their losses. Jordan is still too small and of meager means to have any impact on Middle East politics. Military-run Syria is using the chaos to strengthen its foothold in Lebanon's Al Biqa in order to counter Israel. Rumors abound that the Jewish State and nearly every regional country — including Cyprus, Greece and Turkey — use Beirut and disputed Arabia as the training, recruitment and testing grounds for their elites. The rumors are not far from the truth; the governments share in the profits of training such elites.

Scattered Brethren

• Leviathan: That's one screwed up region you live in Tarik.

• Tarik: I find that offensive Leviathan, but only because it is true. We Companions take our name from those wise men that first followed the prophet Muhammad. Like the legendary friends of the Prophet, I want us to be formidable and influential in the generations to come. For now, however, we are a scattered series of cells united by proximity rather than political belief. The cells themselves often differ in political aims, but our unity is born of necessity. Very few of the cells are globally mobile, and so, they must rely on me to keep

them in contact with Western Teragen groups.

- Narcosis: So you're saying you have little to offer the Teragen?

- Tarik: On the contrary, despite our currently scattered state, we hold far more political power than you could hope for in your own countries. The Teragen in the Middle East is a hidden phenomenon, but we are numerous. Iran's Shi'ite regime has pushed most of its novas right into the Teragen's waiting arms. The governments, though not united, openly oppose the Companions and other Teragen factions if only to tow the Utopian line; many nations hope to benefit from the same sponsorship as Ethiopia and Bahrain. Fortunately, these same governments are willing to play both sides if they think they can use the Teragen.

- Geryon: Hang on there, sheik. I don't like where this is going! Use us how?

- Tarik: I appreciate your ability Geryon, but do not refer to me as "sheik." To answer your question, however: Use the Teragen to carry out missions against rival countries and to curtail the rise in religious fervor, to undertake "black ops" as you Americans are so fond of saying. But again, I said they think they can use us. This is far from the truth.

- Scripture: I am uncomfortable with the notion that your people are responsible for curtailing religious expression.

- Tarik: We did not abandon Islam, sir; it forsook us. Still, the politics of religion divide the Companions as it does you. We cannot all be so fortunate to share Japan's enlightened view of our nature. The Shi'ite have all but declared war against us as abominations to Allah. Thankfully, the Sunni have taken a more worldly view of novas, and groups like the Sufis welcome us as gifted brethren. Unfortunately, there is no united opinion on novas as seems to exist among Christians; the closest Muslims come is a mildly negative reaction. While our standing is improving, thanks in part to the enthusiasm of the West, we are still seen as something to be tolerated. Novas are generally seen as political tools, abominations before Allah, heretical usurpers or simply suspicious.

- Apothecary: Then what benefits can the Teragen gain from such an environment?

- Tarik: We may be scattered, but we have many exploitable possibilities. The oil-producing nations hope the Teragen can reverse the financial instability caused by the hypercombustion engine. This means they are willing to negotiate with the Companions if they think we can offer them the next eufiber. We can, if we so choose. Synapse, would you create the hologram I asked you for? Thank you.

The Badanah Complex

- Tarik: What you see is the supposedly abandoned complex of Badanah. It was built in the 1930s as one of four pumping stations along a pipeline running from the Persian Gulf to the Port of Sidon in Lebanon. Each station would process a portion of the crude before send-



Estimated Power Levels

Strength: 8
Intellect: 4
Speed: 3
Offense: 7
Defense: 6
Versatility: 6

The Confederate

Birth Name: Barry Meldrum

Date of Birth: January 24, 1975

Place of Origin: Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada

Archetype: Marvel (first stage)

Powers: A pillar of black basalt, The Confederate not only possesses massive strength, but is also attuned to the movement of planetary convection currents. He can use these currents to augment his strength and act as a force field around himself. He can also create minor earthquakes and channel deadly blasts of molten rock. He has yet to undergo his first Chrysalis and is weary of excessive taint. Already his powers have resulted in oversized muscles and flames flowing over his skin.

Background: The Confederate is a rising force within the Teragen. Although he has only been with the movement for a little over a year, he has made an impressive impact. Originally a

member of Nova Vigilance, The Confederate soon found the broader agenda of the Primacy more to his liking. In recent months, he has risen to the position of Geryon's second as enforcer of the Teragen. In his quest, he's made a number of questionable alliances — most recently with Nigerian overlord Sango. His motivation is simple: power. He sees himself as a natural leader, and while Mal leads the Teragen, The Confederate believes something even greater lies in store for himself.

The Confederate is opinionated and has the courage of his convictions. Few know, however, that he is not only a nova supremacist, but a white supremacist as well. He acknowledges that novas are above humans, but the inhuman appearance of some of his fellow Terats disgusts him. He wants to be a god, not a monster; for him, there is no point in being the One Race if everyone looks like a freak. The Confederate has visions of a future where novas lead a pure world, cleansed of most "species" of baselines. He is using his contacts and the Primacy to make his genocidal dreams a reality and is starting to infect Shrapnel with his visions.

ing it to the next camp for further refinement. The government of Saud, after whom Arabia is named, allowed the Americans to keep these stations as long as they maintained hospitals to care for the regional Bedouin. The pumping stations eventually turned into small communities, each with housing and facilities for a dozen families, a school for their children and dormitories for another 50 bachelor doctors and nurses. By the 1970s, each complex even included a transmission station that broadcast video-taped shows to the immediate area.

With the outbreak of the war in Lebanon during the 1980s, the facility in Sidon was shut down, and the camps became obsolete. Two of the camps closed, leaving Badanah and Turaif to carry the burden. With Sidon closed, however, the camps only pumped oil to my native Jordan, which is how I became aware of their existence. The discovery of the hypercombustion engine finally closed the other two camps. The cost of maintaining the camps far exceeded their worth in pumping oil. Using my regional contacts and Saudi Arabia's close ties with Jordan, I offered the principalities' Prince Rashid a suggestion. In exchange for turning Badanah over to the Teragen, we would use the abandoned hospital facilities and pumping station as research laboratories for the prince's benefit. Once he was convinced, I took the opportunity to introduce Prince Rashid to Narcosis. Needless to say, our esteemed colleague has seen to it that Rashid is kept quite content with her touch alone.

Of course Badanah exists to serve us alone, as a dedicated research facility, a gathering point for the Middle-Eastern Terat cells and a vacation resort. How you arrive there is your concern, however. Saudi Arabia does not hand out tourist visas, unless you are Muslim.

- Sin-Eater: Talk about your out-of-the-way spots. What kind of resort can you have in the middle of an enormous sandbox?

- Tarik: I was, perhaps, too generous with the word resort. The fact remains, however, that we have 10 empty homes with furniture, plumbing and electricity to support visitors; we have a pool hall, movie house, mess hall, canteen and library. The swimming pool is large and well-maintained....

- Leviathan: Still looks way too small for me.



• Tarik: Perhaps, but Badanah remains an excellent place to escape the hectic pace of life among the baselines.

• Orzaiz: And if getting there is a problem, Blinker — who brought you here — is always ready to transport any one of you and your guests to the complex. The dry weather, while hot, is certainly conducive to relaxation. That's not the only advantage of Badanah, however. Bounty, if you will....

• Bene "Bounty" Manata: I've discussed this with Tarik and Scripture, both of whom believe it is a wonderful idea. As you know, our first generation of children are now toddlers and safe in my Nursery. Were our enemies to discover that enclave, however, we could lose any hope of a future. Badanah offers a secure alternative, relatively distant from prying eyes, where Terat surrogate parents can adopt some of the older children and raise them in a small-community. They have a five-room school where we can educate our young and a playground that is usable, after we reinforce it.

• Synapse: I did a prelim run on the camp, and despite a few electronic brown-outs, Badanah can be brought up to date technologically. We can pirate satellite feeds through the old transmission station and pipe them directly to the local homes. They've got a water-treatment center and private power station, so no worries about tapping into an external power grid.

• Shrapnel: Tarik, are those empty oil containers?

• Tarik: Yes.

• Shrapnel: Bet you we can clean them out and use them as hidden training arenas for the wee ones.

• Orzaiz: Capital idea, Shrapnel. Tarik, what do you say?

• Tarik: Badanah is the Teragen's to do with as it will. Eight Companions live there currently. The camp can support up to 100 people between the homes, the two dormitories and the small hotel. I wouldn't recommend that that many people live there, however. It might draw too much attention.

• Bounty: Do we even have 100 dedicated members?

• Geryon: Begging your pardon, Turok, but why did such a small camp need two dormitories and a hotel?

• Tarik: The dormitories were for the unmarried men and women, who had to live in separate locations. The hotel is a small eight-room structure with a large conference room. Many people visited the camps while they were open.

• Scripture: Since the hospital is acting as the Teragen's bureaucratic offices and research facility, I would like the hotel turned over to the Church of Mal so we can convert it into a house of worship.

• Geryon: Here we go with the religious shite....



Estimated Power Levels:

Strength: 3

Intellect: 6

Speed: 4

Offense: 3

Defense: 6

Versatility: 7

Tarik ibn'Mahmoud

Birth Name: Tarik ibn Mahmoud

Date of Birth: June 5, 1965

Place of Origin: Amman, Jordan

Occupation: Wealthy industrialist

Archetype: Portent (first stage)

Power: Tarik is a shapeshifter of limited capacity, able to change his features but not his mass. Tarik's greatest gift, however, is his ability to control pathogens in his system. Although his powers keep them hidden, his system is a cocktail of viruses including HIV and HIV II, Lassa fever, hantavirus, yellow fever, cholera, E. coli and dengue. Using small spines that he can extend from his skin at will, Tarik can infect a target with a viral packet from his own body. Once the disease is in a new host, Tarik controls its infection rate and vector. Tarik normally blackmails his victims and causes the virus to manifest only briefly as proof of his control. After that, the virus remains invisible and dormant until Tarik decides otherwise.

Background: Born into a prominent Jordanian family, Tarik's parents were always on close terms with high-ranking members of the PLO. Tarik grew to become an affluent member of Amman's business community, and his ties to both the political and revolutionary forces

within the Middle East afforded him a great degree of personal power.

The catalyst for his eruption was the introduction of HIV into his bloodstream. His limited shapeshifting ability came from his body's ability to absorb the intrusive viruses and alter their composition. Since that fateful discovery, Tarik has followed a personal agenda: power and absolute power. Using his abilities to contaminate others, Tarik has infected influential Arab politicians and then blackmailed them about their disease. While Utopia has cured HIV, it still carries a sexual and drug-related stigma in Islamic countries. Many of Tarik's victims buckle to keep their ailment a secret. Those who don't die before they can tell anyone.

By the time Mal issued *The Null Manifesto*, Tarik already had significant influence in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt. His contacts enabled him to recruit many Middle-Eastern novos, whom he kept hidden in cells across the various countries. Mal's message appealed to Tarik. He saw it both as a message of confederacy from a like-minded individual and as a means of spreading his power. When he was ready to contact the Teragen, he commanded one of his hidden cells of Companions to capture the poseurs who had defamed the Teragen by committing unnecessary murders in their name. When the Teragen came looking for the culprits, Tarik gladly handed over their heads as a show of allegiance.

• Apostle: Hold your tongue Geryon. The political goals of this mission have been attained, but not the religious. Why should you alone benefit from this endeavor?

• Leviathan: I'll get into religion, Delorimier, if it means I can crucify your ass.

• Tarik: Enough! Forgive me for speaking out of turn, but I intended Badanah for all Terats. No one clique will reap sole benefit from this project. I agree with Scripture that the hotel would be a perfect choice for a house of worship, as long as no one religion is given preference. The Companions still follow Islam....

• Bounty: ...As I still follow the teachings of the Yoruba.

• Scripture: Agreed. All voices have a place in my heart, and I did not intend the hotel to be for the cult alone.

• Tarik: And while you are guests in Badanah, I will ask you to follow the laws of hospitality as I shall, as your host.

• Confederate: Laws of hospitality? Like what, cleaning the lid after you've taken a leak?

• Tarik: I'm not sure what you mean by that, and I'm sure I do not want to know either.

The three laws of hospitality are quite simple: First, regardless of our relationship, I cannot refuse you a comfortable bed, a good meal and a secure roof over your head. Second, you must leave your feuds behind when you enter the compound. No fighting between Terats is permitted. And finally, you must know when you've overstayed your welcome. A good host knows how to indulge his guests, but a good guest knows when to thank the host by leaving. If you give me your word that you will observe these three rules, as I give you mine, then the Teragen has itself a new home.

The Cult of Mal

• Apostle: I think the time has come for me speak. Tarik, I greatly appreciate your hospitality, and Shrapnel, the Primacy's fervor is very important, but what does all this mean if we do not have a central vision guiding us? We have lost our way. We are ignoring the only thing that really makes us what we are — Mal. Yes, I know many of us were around before *The Null Manifesto*, back in the early days, but what were we then? We were children groping at divinity — nothing.

• Mathematician: I beg to differ, we were far from nothing. Divis Mal only vocalized what we had accepted for years — he put it in a nice package the baselines could comprehend. Understand, I respect and admire Mal for his leadership, but he is no more Terat than the rest of us. He's only had more time to explore what he is.

• Scripture: I think you only see part of the picture. Divis would certainly never consider himself above anyone in this room. Instead, he sees the potential we all have — a potential we only catch glimpses of. He is not here to lead, but to guide, to point to the path we must follow. We've all felt his vision, and we are gathered here tonight because of it. I see some feel at a loss to understand Divis, some are intimidated, and others frightened... but why? He only asks that we discover what Teras is, that we look into the abyss within ourselves and give it shape. We know the journey is long and hard, and as a race, we are young, and we've much to learn. Divis lights the way.

The Way of Mal

• Apostle: And that's why we are lost. Mal is not the man on the mountain — he's not an enigma to unravel, Scripture. The Teragen has lost too much time contemplating Mal, when in reality, the truth is simple. You say some are afraid of him, and so they should be. Mal is Teras and has transcended — he looks at us from beyond, knowing that only the strong and faithful can follow. Most of us have seen Mal, looked into his eyes — not only is he more than human, he is far more than nova. To walk in his path is to take a journey into divinity. Our nodes make us superior to humans, but it is Mal who makes us more than novas. Do you think it was chance that he issued *The Null Manifesto*, that it came to him in the Fall of 2005 out of the blue? We were not ready before, the truth is sometimes the hardest to accept. We had to grow into it. Caroline might have, imperfectly and rather basely, put the concept of Teras into words, but it is Mal who gives it form. He lives it every moment. How do you expect to understand yourself and Teras, when you don't open yourself to the glory of Mal?

• Geryon: You can't honestly believe he's divine. I'm the first to acknowledge that he's "The Man," but he's flesh, blood and quantum like the rest of us. I have to side with Numbers over there, all this religious nonsense is dangerous....

• Scripture: It most definitely is, but its lack is decidedly more so. I ask you, what is divinity if not the power to rain down fire and brimstone, to tower above mortals, to move mountains? You don't need to see Divis as a Judeo-Christian deity, perhaps you would be more comfortable seeing him more as an Eastern bodhisattva, enlightened and willing to share his knowledge with the rest of us. We are all gods, and Divis sees this, but he also knows that without awareness it means nothing. This is what all novas have to accept — and what makes us different. Being a Terat is more than defying Utopia and forging a nova nation, it's a quest to enlighten, to achieve our potential, to transcend. If it isn't, all we are is a dark reflection of Utopia, a parody. Doctor Zia, even you must side with me on that. I know your views on the divine, but you, more than anyone else, know that without trying to understand why we are, all we are is monsters — aberrations.

• Apothecary: True, but I put my trust in research, not meditation.

• Apostle: Mal has brought us together, given us a bond that we cannot deny. All that he's asked is that we discover what Teras is, he's shown us what we are capable of. We owe him our worship....

From the journal of Maria "Rattler" Cabral, February 3, 2008

I have to write this down before I forget. Even now, things are hazy - what was in that drink? The Apostle is at least a little bit nuts, but there is truth to what he says. If we don't stop him soon, I fear the worst - then again maybe we need to purge our ranks? I used to think the Primacy was right, now I'm not so sure anymore... I arrived late to The Apostle's enclave, one of those weird sermons at his place in Paris. From the outside, Number 13 Rue du Temple looked ancient but even the exterior didn't prepare me for what lay indoors. It looked like some place Crowley had lived in. Weird paintings hung on the walls, and weird symbols decorated every surface. However, what made it freaky was all the Mal stuff. Votive paintings, sculptures, even a marble frieze with embossed excerpts of *The Null Manifesto* ran the length of the walls. It was like entering a temple to DM himself - and strangely, I could almost feel his presence there. The Apostle welcomed me, dressed in robes and hovering above the ground. There were half-a-dozen other Terats there - Hades, Joff and Leigh, I recognized, the other four, I didn't. Looked like elites. Must be members of NV, I guess. The Apostle passed each of us a chalice and began the sermon. Most of it was predictable - Divis Mal as the godhead of Teragen and the novas, "the one true race." I have to admit, The Apostle was convincing. He really sees something in Mal, and it makes me wonder if I've tried to ignore it - suppress it. What if Mal is correct, that some great destiny awaits us - there must have been a reason why we happened, why we erupted. What if he knows? The Apostle started talking of the signs, of the coming of Mal. Of how the *Galatea's* explosion was the portent Mal had been waiting for - his Star of Bethlehem to usher in the Second Age. When I asked how this could be, how could Mal have been around before the *Galatea*, Marcel responded simply: "For how else could it have been. Trust not what you believe to have happened. You were baseline then, now accept the truth with Terat eyes. The path is chosen, The One is changing now and when he emerges, he'll lead those with pure hearts to the Promised Land, casting the rest aside to the baseline lions." He must have seen the doubt in my face, the room seemed to fade away, and all I could hear was his voice. "You say we are all Terats, patriots one and all. But some hide behind masks and riddles, afraid to take the leap and follow Mal. They may be Terats now, but tomorrow, who knows? Scripture has taught us much. Many hear him but fail to understand that he speaks for Mal as no other is able. The Mathematician hides from the future, frozen, stagnant. The mar-

tyrs, Shrapnel, the Primacy, Leviathan and Nova Vigilance are tools, they see the light — they just lack breadth of vision. Mal does not want dumb beasts as followers. He wants equals or those with the potential to be his equals. The beasts, the criminals, the psychopaths are lost, and the lost, like sheep, will be culled from our ranks. Open yourself and accept the Will of Mal." How come I can remember those words so perfectly? I'm confused....

The Coming Storm

News clips, circa 2006

"...Fighting continues in Kashmir today, in the worst outbreak of violence in the contested territory in weeks.... Forces from all three sides have engaged each other, resulting in a new wave of refugees fleeing the fighting.... Unconfirmed reports suggest the involvement of unidentified elites.... All three governments deny any connections to these novas...." "...A riot in downtown London resulted in 176 deaths and over 200 wounded... protestors clashed with nova supporters but no one is sure why the demonstration turned violent...." "...In Calcutta, police are still trying to stop the burgeoning mite drug trade.... Already reaching epidemic proportions, the city's morgues have been flooded with the youthful victims of the drug...."

Other Voices

• Narcosis: To each his own, but between you and Shrapnel, don't you think you are fueling the fires a little too much?

• Apostle: Resistance without belief is pointless. What's the point in shouting "we are better," if we can't show people that there is a method to our madness? I don't expect the baselines to frolic at the feet of Mal like he's some sort of messiah, because he's *not* their messiah, but they have to understand he is our Savior.

• Swarm Queen: Speaking of fueling fires, Clarion could be a problem, his little high school Kabal could give our enemies more ammunition. I doubt he's spreading any "word" other than his own paranoia.

• Apostle: He's just a faithful soldier. Not all of our members need to understand the minute details, it's enough to point them in the right direction. Appalled, why? It is going to take more than words and actions to build our "Promised Land," and I guarantee some of you lack the conviction to build this so-called nova nation. The cult knows what must be done and is ready to do it.



Estimated Power Levels:

Strength: 2
Intellect: 9
Speed: 5
Offense: 9
Defense: 9
Versatility: 8

Scripture

Birth Name: Jeremiah Scripture

Date of Birth: Unknown

Place of Origin: Unknown

Occupation: Divis Mal's consort and confidante. Mentor to the Cult of Mal

Archetype: Marvel (third stage)

Power: Scripture is Divis Mal's consort for many reasons, not the least of which is his raw power. This is his secret, however, and only under attack will Scripture reveal his more terrifying abilities. Scripture understands human language with perfect clarity. He can also see through lies and intuitively sense a person's true nature. By concentrating, Scripture can extend his translation power to animals. He clearly understands the sentiment and emotional content behind animal speech. Taken further, Scripture can command all animals and people within earshot to do his bidding. Scripture also claims that during moments of extreme concentration, he can hear the voices of life itself; essentially the voice of God. So fine is his understanding of communication that he can reach out and affect the signals in other brains, affecting autonomic responses. He has used this "Babel Syndrome" to make people speak in tongues, to strike them blind or even to stop their

hearts. These are the abilities Scripture allows others to see. Scripture's absolute control of light and air is such that his enemies have been known to spontaneously fall to ashes, even at a distance of several miles.

Background: Those who respect him say that when the Galatea lit the heavens, Scripture erupted while in a state of calm contemplation. The truth behind Scripture's lifelong relationship with Divis Mal is a mystery. His ability to understand languages enables him to circumvent intrusive conversations and deceive mental probes. Still, gossip abounds within the Teragen. Some say Scripture knew Mal before his eruption. Others say Scripture is simply playing Apostle John to his lover Mal's Jesus. Jeremiah claims he follows Mal because he speaks with unparalleled clarity and truth. Others wonder whether Scripture is not setting Mal up to be something greater than he actually is.

Scripture's role as Mal's mouthpiece earned him an early following dubbed the Cult of Mal, but it was not until Mal's most recent Chrysalis that he took an active hand in the workings of the Teragen. Scripture espouses a wholly religious focus for Terats, calling novas the newest avatars of God — angels with souls. This unbending stance has caused no end of friction with The Mathematician, a battle that distracts both leaders from the true threat growing within the Teragen. Still, Scripture bears no malice toward any Terat. He understands all differing points of view, even though he follows his own path and often mediates inner-group conflicts.

The Casablancas

• Mathematician: If I may, I think that after such an injection of dogma we need to remember that not all our members have their heads in the clouds.

• Scripture: Your editorializing does not help matters, Pedro. We've known each other too long for that. This meeting is about unified action and agreement. Might it not be best to accept our differences rather than always drawing them out?

• Leviathan: You tell him, man.

• Mathematician: Yes... you're quite right. My apologies. Shall we move on to the next component of our movement, then, one that does much for our unity? Raoul, if you would tell us about your Casablancas.

• Orzaiz: Gracias, Señor Santiago. I'm pleased to address this assemblage, but I can hardly call the Casablancas mine, and I'm not even sure we should be called a faction. We are little more than a network of well-informed members of the movement, gathering information for the good of all Terats. But, if you insist....

We Are Allies

• Orzaiz: The Casablancas exist because we must all be well informed if we are to emancipate our species. Military intelligence is a crucial element in any war. The loss of Caroline Fong early in our history is a prime example of what awaits us if we do not keep track of our enemies. Of course, we also need to be on the lookout for opportunities. I know my brethren in the Primacy will scoff at this idea, but there are some baselines who can be of use to us. Tarik's success in the Saudi desert is certainly proof of that. We Casablancas cooperate to make sure that the Teragen as a whole has the information it needs, can see its enemies coming and can continue to grow as a movement. Some have called us an espionage service, but as romantic as that sounds to my ears, we are more of a roundtable than an organized spy ring. In fact, we are very much an outgrowth of the early meetings that gave birth to our movement.

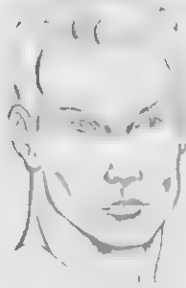
• Narcosis: Not that it doesn't work for you, but why "the Casablancas?"

• Orzaiz: You mean beyond my undying affection for Ingrid Bergman and Claude Rains? [laughs]

• Synapse: It's just a name someone tagged us with. We don't all have marketing schemes set up for us, babycakes.

• Narcosis: Maybe you could afford one if you didn't spend all your time lurking on All-Nude-Novas OpNet sites....

• Synapse: Says the slut-queen herself. You seen some of the fan sites on you, babe?



The Apostle

Birth Name: Marcel Delormier

Date of Birth: May 1, 1970

Place of Origin: Paris, France

Occupation: Cult leader

Archetype: Marvel (third stage)

Powers: The Apostle is one of the most charismatic men on the planet, and one glance of his perfect eyes can damn 1,000 souls. He exudes narcotic substances from his skin, making his touch utterly addictive. These drugs take the form of a subtle cloud that shrouds his perfect body, but The Apostle may also inject them into others through needle-like hairs. He has complete control over the effects of these drugs, causing hazy bliss, nightmarish bad trips or lethal overdoses as he sees fit. Having just emerged from his second Chrysalis, his impossible beauty is painful to see, clouds of drugs wisp around him like the veils of a harem girl, and he constantly floats several inches off the ground.

Background: Despite his stunning charisma, Marcel Delormier has always been a follower, one with a tendency to betray his leaders. He grew up one of many disenfranchised suburban French youths. Devoid of ambition but filled

with resentment, he made a perfect recruit for the growing ultra-nationalist movement. When he erupted, those doctrines of racial and cultural superiority told him he was now better than all those around him, and he went looking for a new leader. In this quest, he became part of the original Teragen roundtable. There, he met Caroline Fong, and they were soon inseparable. When she decided to undergo the Chrysalis he followed without hesitation, convinced he would emerge better under her guidance. He did indeed emerge transformed and more potent, but her Chrysalis failed (or at least greatly prolonged itself). He took this as a sign of failure and transferred his worship to the Teragen spiritualist Scripture and through him to Divis Mal. Without Scripture's knowledge, he revealed Caroline's resting place to Project Utopia in order to get her out of the way.

Since then, he has followed Scripture and promulgated a vision of Divis Mal as a divine figure. All those who oppose such a view, principally Raoul Orzaiz and The Mathematician, are heretics as far as he is concerned. He recently went through a second Chrysalis and has emerged transformed anew, suddenly understanding that Scripture is a blemish on the Cult of Mal. Only he truly comprehends the glory of Mal: Scripture has tricked him for years with false enlightenment and for that he will pay

Estimated Power Levels:

Strength: 3

Intellect: 4

Speed: 4

Offense: 5

Defense: 6

Versatility: 7

- Narcosis: You hacker twerp! Show yourself before I rip every—
- Orzaiz: Could everyone please calm down? Synapse, please apologize. We're here to strengthen our movement, not to rend it further.
- Synapse: Yeah, sure. Whatever... sorry.
- Orzaiz: Please forgive my disembodied colleague, madam. He is highly effective, but his manners are still somewhat rough. To answer your question, Sin-Eater coined the term "Casablanacas" one night while we were chatting in the Amp Room. She said it was like "something out of Casablanca," and the name simply stuck. Quite mundane, but it actually captures the essence of our movement. We are a disparate collection of novas, all trying to make good on our potential in our own ways. We leave the necessary bloodshed to other Terats and gather facts and share opinions. Sin-Eater, Synapse and myself form the core of our little roundtable, but we have an open-door policy. All those who wish to trade information for the common good are welcome. Looking around this room, I see hardly a single person who has not exchanged some tidbit of knowledge with us. To give you but one example of how we operate, it was Tarik's contacts who told us that Saxon of Team Tomorrow Europe was allegedly following a lead about the murder of Slider in Cairo. Thanks to Shrapnel's contacts among elites working for the Egyptian government, we were able to lure him to Bombay with rumors of "Teragen death-squads." There, a well-timed direct action by members of the Primacy (who agreed to advance a planned attack at my request) seemed to confirm his suspicions and send him toward Kashmir. Synapse, using corporate satellites generously provided by Señor Santiago, tracked his flight toward that slaughterhouse, and we relayed that data to Geryon and his Nova Vigilance strike team. Knowing exactly who they were fighting and with the element of surprise firmly on their side, they took Saxon out in record time. Because of the judicious use of information, the Teragen acted as one unified movement to strike at an enemy with nova blood on his hands. This is what we Casablanacas strive for, not to eliminate our diversity, but to channel it. Our enemies are numerous, we must be effective.

Top Secret/Directive Eyes Only

To: Director Harris
 From: Karl Reinhold, Deputy Director, Bundesnachrichtendienst
 Date: May 15, 2008
 Re: Surveillance of Villa Orzaiz, Valencia, Spain.
 Director,

Observation of the primary residence of avowed Teragen member Count Raoul Cristóbal Orzaiz, overlooking Valencia, Spain, continues unabated, but valuable intelligence has been hard to come by. Direct surveillance of the Villa, combined with IMINT and SIGINT resources, has certainly revealed that Orzaiz welcomes a variety of people to his home, including some known nova troublemakers, various members of the European high society scene (including several members of royalty from different nations) and baseline groupies, but we have yet to make any firm ties to a larger Teragen organization. I have run an analysis of the resources spent on this operation, and I must honestly question its usefulness. Not only is the Directive in position to gather intelligence, but it seems like Interpol, the American CIA (acting independently of us), the Spanish national police and Project Utopia are also skulking around in what must be quite an obvious display. Utopia, as usual, is the most problematic because members of T2M insist on trying to provoke Orzaiz. Both Caestus Pax and Saxon have made visits to the estate in the last 48 hours, making threats about the murder of Jennifer "Slider" Landers. This certainly isn't going to encourage Orzaiz to make any slip-ups in his villa. Instead of wasting our time running endless background checks on every pathetic fan who walks up to the villa's front gates, I recommend we use some of these visitors to get inside and gather some real HUMINT. Also, I think we should make Utopia step back. The judicious release of some of their darker secrets could send them scrambling to cover up and get them out of our hair for a while. God knows, they have enough skeletons in their closet.

Regards,
 — Karl

Agendas and Half-Truths

- Geryon: Do us a favor, won't you, and cut the bullshit?
- Orzaiz: I beg your pardon?
- Geryon: Listen, you done splendidly with the whole Saxon thing. I'll savor the look on that T2Fascist's face when I threw him out of his UN jet for a long time. Giant or no, a 10,000 foot drop won't be a holiday. But please don't try to feed us all a line that you've no plans of your own. I mean Leviathan over here was there with me on the strike, and he had a chance to finish Saxon once and for all. He held back and just pummeled him into a coma. You asked, quite politely, that I not ask questions about what Levy did, so I'm guessing he held back as part of a deal with you. CNN is up in arms about Saxon's disappearance and presumed death, but I'm betting you have him. Listen, if you want to pull his fingernails out one at a time to get the full scoop on Utopia and the rest of those goosesteppers, that's fine by me. More power to you. Just — I mean, please don't tell me you do things out of some noble instinct. We all have items on our respective agendas that we think are important, we all have our own axes to grind. You and the rest of the cloak and dagger team have yours too, and that's fine, but don't lie to my face. Deal?

- Apostle: I do wonder just how beneficial your agenda is, Count Orzaiz. Like Geryon, I cannot question that you have provided useful services for us, but your personal commitment seems to be lacking at times. You surround yourself with baselines and live an idealized baseline lifestyle. You participate in their media and charm their leaders with your quick, highly human smiles. At times, it seems strange to my eyes. You have been with us since the beginning, Raoul, and yet you have never undergone the Chrysalis and bear no visible signs of quantum growth. I wonder if you are not afraid to lose your humanity? Just how deep does your commitment to Mal go?

- Orzaiz: My commitment to the Teragen ideal is complete, Monsieur Delorimier. That has always been sufficient.

- Apostle: And so it remains, count. Sufficient.

- Scripture: I beg to differ. Count Orzaiz, your commitment is much more than sufficient. I speak for Mal when I say that great things await you. It will all become clear in the fullness of time. Monstrosity for monstrosity's sake is worth nothing, Marcel, and you do the Teragen a grievous disservice to promulgate such heresy.... Am I understood?

- Apostle: I... yes, mon ami. You are understood.

Encrypted OpNet Email

To: burning-candy@hotmail.com
From: 12inch@smokingslut.net
Date: 06/05/2008



Estimated Power Levels:

Strength: 3
Intellect: 3
Speed: 4
Offense: 6
Defense: 4
Versatility: 5

Clarion

Birth Name: David Hefflender

Date of Birth: December 2, 1990

Place of Origin: Jacksonville, Florida, USA

Occupation: Nova demagogue

Power: Clarion can generate destructive sound waves through finely attuned vocal chords. He can find an object's or person's resonant frequency, and harmonize it wave for wave. The matching vibration tears the object apart, disintegrating stone and liquefying flesh. Unbeknownst to most Terats, Clarion wields his power with enough finesse to disorient opponents by upsetting the fluid in their inner ear. He can also create hypnotic effects by modulating his voice to a very subtle degree.

Background: Born David Hefflender, Clarion was always manipulative enough to be the central figure in his clique. *The Null Manifesto* heavily influenced the young baseline, and he soon attracted other nova wannabes to his side. He drew most of his entourage from the alienated and disenfranchised segments of his school; con-

vincing them that they were latent novas was easy.

After spending time on Novus OpNet site, David convinced his most ardent groupies to form a pact to bring about their eruptions. Eleven members picked a form of "extreme stimulus" that suited their personality, ranging from self-immolation to a poisoned fruit drink pick me up. David, true to his own assertions of greatness, chose to martyr himself on a self-made cross. Clarion emerged as a result, seven others died by their own misguided hands, while three smartened up and fled.

Having erupted, Clarion murdered his three unfaithful followers, left his home and went to seek the glory of Divis Mal's wisdom (as interpreted by him, of course). Occasional ally, Clarion would encounter a young hidden nova and invite them to join his flock (which many did) or convince his most ardent "chosen" to follow his path to eruption. As a result, when The Apostle brought Clarion into the Teragen, he had a group of five novas already supporting him. Nobody truly knows how many died in the wake of his travels, however.

Clarion is a demagogue of the worst sort and demands worship from his young followers, whom he calls the Kabal. He still haunts Novus, promising wannabes eruption if they follow him. As such, he has a fanatical following of young adults ready to commit violence in his name.

Synapse:

I am... surprised to hear that you managed to lose Saxon. While I'm certain it wasn't negligence or incompetence, I do wonder how you could have allowed that to happen. I was clearly mistaken, but it was my understanding that your fortification was secure. Without Saxon, I fear that we're back to square one regarding Fong. I have solid information from sources within Utopia that Caroline is probably alive, and Tarik's people in Bahrain say the same thing. If we can find her and confirm precisely how Saxon discovered her whereabouts, we might be able to nail Delorimier before he gets any further out of hand. She was taken on his watch, after all. That zealot is going too far with this whole Apostle of Mal idiocy. Even Santiago seems to underestimate the threat he poses to the movement. The only thing holding his power in check is Jeremiah, without whom the situation would be untenable. I've got data from Swarm Queen that Delorimier has even been courting Shrapnel. If he brings the Primacy into his cult, I think we'll have a bloody farce on our hands, at least until Mal returns. He's the only one Marcel listens to. Also, let's keep trying to contact Corbin. He's bound to have a good deal of data we want. This would have been much less difficult had Geryon and Epoch not decided to even a few scores....

Oh well. This isn't the first time a revolution has attracted idiots.

— Raoul

PS: These false addresses you have us using are getting juvenile, Synapse.

Nova Vigilance

- Scripture: Geryon, you've asked that we speak frankly, so perhaps you would like to address us next. You have made yourself quite a reputation among the Teragen and the world at large, although I fear you may have a few things to answer for.

- Mathematician: Now who is editorializing?

- Geryon: Hey, comment to your heart's content. I stand by everything I've done with NV. Nova Vigilance tells the baselines they cannot push a nova around without paying the price. Caestus Pax is pissed at me? That means I'm doing something right.

- Shrapnel: Bloody right! Good to see not everyone is afraid of getting a bit of blood on their hands.

- Geryon: I haven't the slightest fear of that.

Justice In Fire

- Apostle: No one is questioning your willingness to act Geryon, but there are some who might believe that you are just feeding into the baseline mentality. Divis Mal came to liberate us from the monkeys' world-view, not for us to play "super-villains" for their media.

- Geryon: N! and CNN can call us "Team Anti-Tomorrow" all they want, but that's not what we're about.

- Apostle: No; no it's not, but in the face of your terrorist tactics, precisely how are they supposed to know that?

- Geryon: Am I the only one here who actually read *The Null Manifesto*? It tells us to get off our erupted asses and start building something for ourselves, a future for the One Race. The lot of you may think the best way to do that is to stand in a circle chanting and "study the glory of Teras," but I for one prefer to act on my convictions.

- Apostle: I hardly think—

- Geryon: Shut up, Marcel, I'm not finished. How do we expect novas to be free if they spend their time looking over their shoulders? How are newly erupted novas going to feel if the only examples of Terats they see are foppish playboys on N! and screeching monsters in bogus movies? What kinds of pathetic recruits will we get then? What we're doing's not for the baselines, either for or against. We liberate our own. What about the nova who just erupted, discovered she can see through walls, but whose drunken father sticks a Glock in her mouth to save her from becoming a devil? Are we here for her or for her waste-of-skin father?

I'm sure you will remember last year's little incident, when Utopia hauled Sluice in after he dared show his face in Tampa? Well, I decided then and there that enough was enough and went public. That fascist Rupert was saying that novas should be destroyed wholesale, but T2M called Sluice the terrorist and slapped him in their Bahrain hellhole. What a load of shite!

So, yes, I snapped Rupert's neck in the name of the Teragen. Yes, I told the world the Teragen would keep novas from getting reamed by zips and make the guilty suffer for their crimes against the One Race. And under no circumstances will I back down on that nor should any of you. NV is no longer just me. It's half the people in this room and I. We've all gone out and put the fear of God in the baselines who think we're theirs to play with. Raoul, if you want to distance yourself from us on NI, go right ahead. But I'm not backing away from what I am.

- Apothecary: I support your efforts, Geryon. We are the One Race and must defend ourselves against attacks. However, NV does seem to spend a great deal of time clashing with other novas, and you have become a recurring enemy of Utopia's T2M lapdogs. The whole situation is becoming something of a farce, as is your childish rivalry with Lotus Infinite.

- Shrapnel: Just because they've got nodes, doesn't stop them from being right wankers, though, now does it?

- Geryon: Bloody right! Pride in the One Race or not, if a nova is protecting an enemy, they become the enemy. Does anyone here bear any affection for the T2M stormtroopers? I know what goes on inside of Bahrain, boys and girls, and we're talking Mengele on acid, and bad acid at that. T2M exists to put a pretty face on genocide, whether they know it or not, and I for one have no qualms turning those pretty faces to paste.

Lotus is another thing altogether. She's a corporate mercenary, and someone's paying her to take me. That's a personal issue. I'm going to kick her into the next timezone, find out who's been paying her hospital bills and personally send them to the tunnel of light. I guarantee it.

Justice Served

- Orzaiz: I think many of us would like to know exactly how you operate. You present yourself as the movement's chief executioner, but we are rarely consulted on your decisions.

- Geryon: I consult as much as the next chap, Raoul. When I hear about one of us getting the shaft, I don't just take to the sky and start snapping necks. If NV is going to mean anything, we have to act when it's going to make a difference. Here is my approach: I see if anyone else in the movement agrees that something needs to be done. NV is all about acting to protect our brothers and sisters. If no one else agrees to a takedown — or should you mount a suitably convincing argument against — I'll relent. Personal issues are personal issues; this is for the One Race.

I'll give you an example. Last February, we all saw on CNN that the South Africans were starting a "pilot program" requiring novas to wear lowjacks so they could be more easily monitored. They said they'd had too much trouble with elites from Nigeria coming down to Capetown to act out, but we all know that's nonsense. When I saw the gentleman in charge on OpNet...

- Orzaiz: Minister of Home Affairs Malcolm Chigwedere.

- Geryon: Yes, that's the chap. Anyway, I thought it was time to take him out, so I talked to some others in the movement to see if there were any real objections. There were none, and Leviathan and The Confederate even joined Epoch and myself on that noble endeavor. That's what NV is all about, us working together to get some justice. So the Minister paid the price for messing with the One Race, and they've done an about-face on the lowjacks.

- Orzaiz: That has more to do with pressure from Utopia, don't you think? Aren't you just augmenting the fear of the baselines?

- Geryon: Quite so! But the point is moot, really. They're going to be afraid of us regardless. They may play pretty with Utopia, but we all know that every baseline in the world is quaking because there are more and more of us sharing space with them. Isn't that what the Directive is all about, Count? What about the sterilization conspiracy Bounty talks about? That's fear, and it is unlikely to ever go away. With NV, we channel that fear and make it work in our favor. If we want respect, we must first stand tall and tell baselines they just can't intimidate us.

- Bounty: While I find most of what you say difficult to fault, I do think that there are ways in which we could be more rational in our approach to leading other novas from baseline control. The Aberrant faction, I think, could be a great infusion of talent and new blood into the Teragen if we play our cards right, and yet that's not happening, Geryon. What happened with André Corbin?

- Geryon: I kicked his pathetic arse is what happened. Have you so quickly forgotten that this is the same Corbin who broke into the Rome enclave last year with his Team Tomorrow chums. Do you know what happened to the Harvesters who were there? That much taint means Bahrain for

sure. Perhaps you also remember that it was Corbin who put the cuffs on Sluice and smiled prettily for the cameras all the while. Those were Terats he sent off to the slaughter, my friends. So he's running from Utopia now, does that mean I forget what he's done? On the contrary, Epoch and I caught up to him in New Zealand, and we got some payback. It's just too bad the little git escaped.

- Orzaiz: Do you even begin to realize how much your rash action may have cost us? Utopia is a grave threat to our species and our movement, much more than any of the petty baseline politicians you have executed. Corbin and his so-called "Aberrants" could have provided us with valuable insight into what is going on inside. Instead, we get to read the Washington Post like the rest of the monkeys!

- Epoch: Corbin and the other fugitives have to become strong if they are going to contribute to the cause. He survived our assault and, from there, built his movement. If anything, we showed him the way, count.

- Bounty: If I may, I think you are all overstating matters. Geryon and Epoch may have acted rashly, but I'm sure they didn't know just how vital Corbin would become. At the time of the incident, only you knew that he was forming this Aberrant movement, Raoul. I believe less recrimination and more sharing of information is in order.

From an NI! Broadcast of *Two Minutes Hate* on May 5, 2007

"Okay, pay attention. I will no longer sit and watch novas get the shaft any more, nor will the Teragen. You say we have 'human rights,' but every day, novas die in your killing fields. Baseline courts sit back and we get the shaft, and we have therefore decided to take matters into our own hands. Henceforth, there will be hell to pay for injustices perpetrated upon any member of the One Race. We are a young people and our justice is simple: an eye for an eye.

"To the good people of Tampa, who have banned us from your town because we're a menace, prepare to receive your comeuppance. To those who want to emulate the children in Italy who hanged a classmate because they thought he was a nova, you had best be on good terms with your creator. And to any baseline who wants to stop me: You are cordially invited to kiss your arse goodbye.

"Vigilance!"

— Geryon (self-proclaimed Teragen member), popularity rating 72 percent



Geryon

Birth Name: James Booth

Date of Birth: Unknown

Place of Origin: Unknown

Occupation: Nova vigilante, terrorist

Archetype: Monster (second stage)

Powers: Geryon is exceptionally strong, durable and quick; all his physical abilities can probably be ranked as well into the superhuman. He has been recorded hurling riot-tanks well over the length of a city block and tearing apart reinforced concrete with his bare hands. His hide is highly resistant to damage, and he is apparently immune to most forms of small-arms fire.

What's more, Geryon has demonstrated some level of adaptive shapeshifting powers. Although he has never been recorded shifting his entire form, he has been known to sprout gills and fins for easier swimming or shifting his legs into digitigrade form for immensely heightened quadrupedal running speed.

Geryon's personal fighting skills also know few equals. He is apparently unwilling to rely purely on his natural superhuman strengths and has developed a

highly acrobatic, devastating style of personal combat. He has been known to hold his own against four novas at once without falling completely on the defensive.

Background: As the monstrous enforcer of the Teragen, Geryon can safely be ranked among the 10 most feared criminal novas in the world. His name is taken from Dante's *Inferno* — an appropriate source for this devil among novas. Apart from this, little is known about his origins, apparently he was recruited by an ally shortly after erupting. He is apparently a founding member of the Teragen, and his accent places him as British, but there's little else to tell.

Perhaps his only redeeming feature is his refusal to take the life of another nova. Although he has never fully explained the motive behind this, he seems unwilling to move to lethal combat with other novas. However, even this is a small mercy — he is perfectly willing to cripple other novas as a demonstration of his power, as the tragic paralyzation of Harmony proves. Again, he has yet to explain this dichotomy between cruelty and mercy; then again, few people care to hear his reasons.



Estimated Power Levels:

Strength: 8

Speed: 7

Offense: 7

Defense: 8

Variability: 8

From the New York Post, 12 January 2008:

In a battle right out of the Xtreme Warfare Federation, novas from Team Tomorrow and members of the terrorist group Nova Vigilance battled in Manhattan yesterday. According to Project Utopia representatives, members of T2M were responding to a terrorist threat against the General Assembly Building of the United Nations. T2M superstars Jennifer "Slider" Landers, André "Bender" Corbin and team leader Montoya-Bernal faced off against four hostile novas in front of the UN General Assembly Building.

The terrorists were apparently members of Nova Vigilance, a murderous counterpart to T2M linked to the Teragen. Their members included Geryon (still wanted for the murder last year of Tampa Mayor Frederick Rupert), Natalya "Swarm Queen" Dornova (who once served as an elite in Africa) and two previously unknown novas. The other two terrorists were truly horrific creatures. One seemed to be a walking mass of viscera in human shape, while the other was a dragon-like creature measuring over a dozen feet.

Enemies of the One Race

- Mathematician: I think we can all agree with Bounty that a certain coordination is becoming increasingly necessary. Without it, the probability of our success drops precipitously.

- Geryon: It's a thin line between coordination and hierarchy, but I'll play along for a bit. Perhaps I should tell you whom I think should be next for NV?

- Mathematician: Fine.

- Geryon: Okay. Some of you think it's a waste of time to worry about individual anti-nova crimes, but I still think it's justified. We mustn't stand by and allow our brothers and sisters to be stepped on simply because it happens in the shadows. So, I'm looking to France right now. There's a court case there where some whacked-out old sod shot his neighbor's daughter. It just went big in the press because he said that the girl was a nova who could read his thoughts. He pulled the trigger because he thought she was one of us, and that makes him my business.

- Shrapnel: Well, he won't be any great loss to the monkeys, but he hardly seems worth the effort.

- Geryon: That's where we disagree, but there are other targets you might like. You heard about Houston Tornado getting iced by those Archangel Michael freaks in the States, right? Well I hear some elite friends of the Tornado's are looking to get some justice for their mate, and I say we lend them a hand. Once they've made justice for themselves, they may just open their eyes to the truth.

- Orzaiz: That's certainly interesting....

- Geryon: You see, count, I can play the subtle game on occasion. But once they've gotten their retribution, we'll need to finish things once and for all. That cult teaches baselines that we're monsters in need of destruction; I suggest we respond in kind. I'm rather keen on the idea of taking the lot of those self-righteous fucks out of the gene pool. I'd wager that even baselines could do with fewer pissant towns in East Texas and many fewer televangelists twits telling them what to do.

- Leviathan: Good idea. I think the Harvesters could lend a hand in that little operation....

The Harvesters

- Leviathan: Alright, if I'm gonna be volunteering us, I guess we're up next. Zia, you want to go first or do I kick this off?

- Apothecary: I'll begin, if you don't mind. I know some of you, and others were a mystery up to this point. I'm honored to be in the company of such luminaries. We represent a cross section of what novas can offer the world, and I suppose we Harvesters show that potential unleashed.

- Narcosis: Before you launch into the monologue, can somebody explain just what the Harvesters do? I mean from what I've seen so far, you take care of any Terats who can't handle taint. Is that it?

Wanted by Interpol



James Booth, alias Geryon

Wanted for Murder, Terrorism and Issuing Death Threats

Leader of terrorist group Nova Vigilance, suspected member of the Teragen.

Considered armed and extremely dangerous.

Wanted in the United States, South Africa, Thailand and by the United Nations.



Jesus Morales, alias Matador

Wanted for Murder and Terrorism

Member of terrorist group Nova Vigilance, suspected member of the Teragen and

Zapatista Revolutionary Movement

Considered armed and extremely dangerous.

Wanted in Mexico, South Africa and by the United Nations.



Bihn Nguyen, alias Gauze

Wanted for Murder, Kidnapping and Terrorism

Member of terrorist group Nova Vigilance, suspected member of the Teragen.

Considered armed and extremely dangerous.

Wanted in United States, Mexico, Vietnam and by the United Nations.

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Monstrous Beginnings

• Apothecary: I was getting to that, but yes, the Harvesters find and protect those novas so taint-afflicted that they are deformed. More than that, we help them cope with taint, allowing the nova to direct the vector of corruption and turn it into an advantage.

• Leviathan: Not again, Zia. You see folks, Zia here thinks we're some traveling freak show that he can take pity on and offer hope to. Maybe that's how things started, Zia, but times change. We've gotten tired of acting like the people under the stairs, and we're proving we have something solid to offer the Teragen.

• Confederate: Amen brother. Since Leviathan's turned the Harvesters around and involved, we've gotten some badly needed talent for direct actions against the enemy.

• Apothecary: But that's counterproductive to our goals.

• Leviathan: Your goals, Zia.

• Apothecary: Our goals. I am aware that the Harvesters need to be more involved, but blindly following the brutal path that NV espouses is an easy way out for novas already unbalanced by taint. I began the Harvesters to help the Teragen understand taint and how to control it better. I chose those like Leviathan because they seemed better adapted to their quantum evolution. We need an edge over Utopia, and understanding our natures is our best hope. How can we be One Race when we don't even know what we can truly accomplish as individuals?

• Leviathan: So, using us as guinea pigs is your answer? We're educated lab rats to you.

• Synapse: "Well, I don't know Brain, what d'you want to do?"

• Geryon: Shut up, Sparky!

• Apothecary: How many of you have undergone the Chrysalis? And of those who did, did you enjoy the sensation of being completely helpless for the days, weeks or months you changed? I'm certain Caroline Fong did not when T2M kidnapped her. And those of you who haven't undergone Chrysalis yet, does the process frighten you, or are you wondering why you cannot grasp the fundamentals of change? Well keep your sarcasm to yourself; I will not have my research ridiculed.

I am an evolutionary scientist, and it is my job to ensure that we evolve beyond who we are now. Yes, I use the Harvesters to forward this research, but everyone there is there by choice. In exchange for their help, I offer them refuge — they're my children, and we all dream a future free of baselines. But every journey begins with small steps. You know that better than anyone else Leviathan. If you believe helping me lessens your ego, then perhaps you'd be happy with the Pandaimonion.

• Narcosis: Hey! We're not the enemy here.

• Apothecary: Sorry Narcosis, but there is a point to be made here. I'm trying to find a means to turn the Chrysalis into an ongoing process, one that does not require us to remain vulnerable for its duration. If we found such a means, then we wouldn't have to worry about Divis Mal entering decade-long cocoons. Are any of you comfortable with the fact that each Chrysalis is longer than the last or that we may eventually sleep for years before we can emerge? I thought not.

Those Harvesters who tire of my research and me have every right to leave and join Leviathan on his quest. Many have already done so, despite my advice. Still, there are those who prefer to stay close to Heartland. They remain with me because they believe they can make a positive contribution to the Teragen.

• Geryon: Screw you, you bloody geezer. NV makes a positive contribution.

• Apothecary: Random destruction and violence are rarely positive, Geryon. They turn others, both nova and baseline, against us and form a self-perpetuating doomsday mechanism that might see the end of us all, if we're not careful.

• Mathematician: Here, here.

• Orzaiz: Very well Doctor Zia, you've made your point. I'd like to hear what Leviathan has to say now.

• Leviathan: Thanks, count; you're a righteous Terat. Alright, so maybe Zia does have a point about the Chrysalis, but the fact remains that not all of us are eggheads. Heartland attracts those Harvesters who want to live in a secluded environment. Brooklyn, my turf, is the stomping grounds for Harvesters low on talk and high on action. We're in a war, people, and squeamish or not, Herr Utopia is out to kill anything not square-jawed and shiny-toothed. Well guess what, I've got 200 teeth too many to be a Utopian poster boy, and dabbling with the Chrysalis makes each of you a killable suspect.

I don't need a score sheet to know Utopia has it in for me, and I'm sure as hell not going to hunker down and wait for their assault. I'm fighting for my life and for the lives of all the freaks and deviants I call friends. If that means hitting them when they're asleep, then I'm bringing Narcosis to knock them out. If that means hitting them with their back turned, then I'll ask Blinker to teleport me behind the enemy. Either way, the Harvesters, or at least the Harvesters with me, are ready to get into a bleeding knuckle brawl. That's why you'll find us fighting alongside Geryon and Nova Vigilance. That's why we're getting involved with the Primacy. It's time to act. If we have to react, then it's too late.

The Heartland

• Orzaiz: Doctor Zia, please bring us up to date on the Heartland.
 • Apothecary: When I was working with Horizon, I managed to siphon funds by over-billing projects and, eventually, by swindling money outright. Although Utopia uncovered my dealings, and I was forced to flee, the funds were never traced, thanks to some help later on from Synapse's creative electronic abilities. While I'm at it, I should also thank the Casabancas for helping me "purchase" the land titles and arranging the proper paperwork.

The result was Heartland, a nice little Nebraska community south of Samuel R. McKelvie National Forest and north of Middle Loup River. We are far enough away from the region's highways and major thoroughfares to avoid regular traffic, and the baselines who do travel through mistake us for a peaceful one-street town.

A community of sympathetic baselines runs Heartland. Most have loved ones deeply affected by taint. They know the threat Utopia poses for their families, and choose to live in our quiet dale to further the illusion of normalcy. Beneath the town, however, is a network of tunnels and underground hangers that the late Tunnel Mole hollowed out for us. Before taint claimed his mind, he managed to lay the foundations for what is now my laboratories and the apartments for the Harvesters living there.

• Geryon: Baselines front for you guys? How long you think it'll take before they sell you out?

• Apothecary: On the contrary, our baseline allies recently ensnared an intruder who had stumbled upon our secret, and they dealt with him accordingly. These baselines are family members of tainted novas who want to see their loved ones get better. They'll protect our secrets quite zealously. Marshal Wycoff is especially dedicated and his son Calvert is one of my most interesting cases. The boy is a most... promising specimen.

• Scripture: But how do your Harvesters further the Teragen's goals, Doctor?

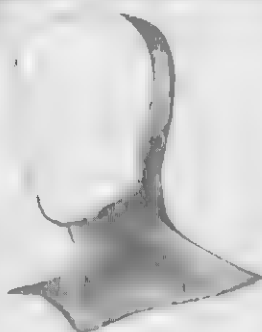
• Apothecary: Through research and development. We study the progression of regulated and unregulated taint and find methods to control them. Admittedly, this would not have been possible had Divis Mal not shown us the way. Now that we understand that taint can be managed over time, the town provides an excellent place for further research and to help re-introduce Harvesters into a workable society once they have recovered mentally.

• Confederate: And how do you find tainted novas? Doesn't Utopia typically get to them first?

• Apothecary: Sadly, yes. Through hard work, however, we've managed to find seven families who were willing to join our cause. Our greatest coup was one Texas household whose three teenage children all erupted because of each other. The three sibling seem to have a remarkably strong telepathic link to one another, even at long distances. Once they've grown up a bit, they'll make spectacular Terats.

• Orzaiz: But these families don't realize you are Teragen members.

• Apothecary: Oh, to be certain, they suspect, but frankly, they are more concerned



Estimated Power Levels

Strength: 6
 Intellect: 4
 Speed: 7
 Offense: 7
 Defense: 6
 Versatility: 8

Epoch

Birth Name: Charlie Benton
Date of Birth: August 17, 1981
Place of Origin: Queens, New York, USA
Occupation: Elite, nova serial killer
Archetype: Portent (second stage)
Powers: Epoch has potent control of gravity,

inhuman sensory powers, telepathy and exceedingly potent telekinesis. Born blind, his eruption allowed Charlie to "see" for the first time. Epoch uses ESP to sense what is around him without the need to "look" at it, and his perception is unaffected by light (or its absence), making him a keen hunter. He can shift his perception anywhere within his field of "vision." He can levitate himself and hurl objects at his opponents or deflect attacks aimed at him. Since he is blind and capable of telepathy, he wears his featureless mask without concern for vision or speech.

Background: Charlie resented being born blind. His parents sent him to the best schools they could afford, but even there he did not fit in. Unable to see, Charlie developed a morbid fascination, living voyeuristically by reading the few exploits of

serial killers and the insane that were available in Braille.

Charlie erupted in 2004, after a car accident left his father dead. Charlie barely escaped using his new powers. After training at the Manhattan Rashoud facility, Epoch, as he started calling himself, became an elite. He knew no other way to vent his anger until Mal issued *The Null Manifesto*.

Epoch is one of the few elites who openly proclaim their ties to Teragen. He is more than happy battling other novas to ensure that only the fittest survive when the One Race takes over. When Epoch takes his mask off, he hunts down and kills those novas he perceives as tarnishing the One Race. Epoch's status as an elite allows him to cull the weak from the nova gene pool and get paid for it. Though his views unnervingly his employers, few can dispute Epoch's combat prowess. He is single-handedly responsible for over two dozen nova kills, placing him second only to Totentanz in nova body count. Consequently, his services are wanted all over the globe. There is more to Epoch than meets the eye, however. He has used his wealth to buy an island in the South Pacific, which he uses as a sanctuary for various social rejects and outcasts he has abducted. So long as they serve him and show proper deference, he is lenient, in the manner of a pet owner. For most of them, it's better than the alternative.

with the safety of their afflicted family members. For the most part, they all join out of gratitude or because they've heard the stories about Utopia's death camp.

- Geryon: So what's this little resort of yours like? Anything like Club Sand?
- Apothecary: Oh, no. Heartland is a one-road town. Nothing as glamorous as Badanah.
- Tarik: Very true. We have two roads....

• Apothecary: Well we have a gas station, grocery store and a small diner. The remaining buildings scattered about are the homes of the baseline families. The atmosphere is very mundane. We keep a very low profile. The main entrance to our facility is in the basement of the diner. From there, you will find a mile of passages hewn in stone. The corridors are wide enough to accommodate somebody with the bulk of Leviathan, as are the adjoining apartments for the resident Harvesters. The accommodations are Spartan, but functional, and our labs are well-equipped. Most of Horizon's resources went into the basic structure of Heartland, however, so I am grateful for funding from both The Mathematician and Tarik.

- Tarik: It seems your Heartland could be Badanah's American sister.
- Apothecary: Perhaps, but we are not a resort. Heartland is a care facility and research center.

Venetian Canals

- Geryon: Alright Fishbait, you're up next.

• Leviathan: Thanks Ger. Well the Venetian canals aren't apple pie and shish kebab like the Heartland and Banana....

- Tarik: Badanah.

• Leviathan: Badanah, right — what was I thinking? — but Venice is home to the other Harvester movement. I claimed my stake right under T2M's nose and spent several years scouting out the Venetian canals. Now I got to say I knew Venice had a long history, but you'd be amazed at the junk I found down there.

- Sin-Eater: Is it true that Venice is sinking?

• Leviathan: Kinda. Venice is in a lagoon filled with a buttload of islands. The largest island is called Rialto and that's where the heart of the city is. It's got a lot of waterways, the largest of which is an s-shaped river called the Grand Canal. Because of something like 50,000 artesian wells, the city foundation is sinking an inch every three years, and this has been happening for a good while. Over the centuries, Roman tombs and other buildings sank into the water when their foundations gave out. Some places were destroyed, but others were abandoned and forgotten about. That's where we hang out.

- Synapse: In the water?

• Leviathan: I do, but I'm bright enough to realize that not everybody wants to puddle through the Venice sludge. Wimps. No. We've used air pumps to create positive pressure within specific chambers, reclaiming catacombs, a small cathedral and some WW II bunker the SS hid in during the Allied invasion.

- Geryon: Brilliant!

• Leviathan: Well, that's not the coolest part. In the small cathedral, we restored some mosaics. What we found floored me, though. Get this: There were ancient pictures of Mal in the church, ascending into Heaven.

- Apostle: What?!

• Leviathan: Hehehehe. Oh I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I couldn't resist yanking your chain. Should have seen your face, Delorimier.

- Orzaiz: Leviathan, respect please.

• Leviathan: You're right, I'm sorry [snicker]. Look folks, there ain't much to the canals. The only way to reach them is by going underwater, and unless you know the way through the underwater maze, you'll never make it in. Utopia and most baselines wouldn't even bother entering the water. That bioremedial bacteria that they introduced into the oceans and seas, the sushi mama or whatever they call it, really cleaned everything up, but Venice still keeps dumping her sewage into the canals. You could be skimming through clean waters one day, and swimming past brown packages the next. With our superior immune system, the Harvesters don't get sick though. We have no problem reaching these underwater safe houses, but if you want in, you gotta follow us. No teleporters allowed. Those are the rules.

- Narcosis: So, you live amidst slime and filth?

• Leviathan: Hey, I live decently. I've cleaned up the little cathedral I found. Sure, it's half-flooded and smells a little funky, like rotting wood, but there's something to be said about the smell of decay. Ever since they cleaned up the water, some of the fish returned too, supplying me and a few pals with fresh take-out. Most Harvesters don't live there either. We use the chambers as meeting spots and to stash supplies. It's not the fancy accommodations Orzaiz has got going, but at least it keeps me moist and happy and unlike the good count, I don't have the Directive, Project Utopia, Team Tomorrow, James Bond, Interpol, Mossad, the CIA and everybody else monitoring what I'm doing and who I talk to.

• Orzaiz: I let them watch me because it eases their worries. I demonstrate that it's possible for Terat and baseline to interact peacefully, despite Teragen sympathies.

• Leviathan: Yeah, hey, knock yourself out. That's just not my kettle of fish.

The Pandaimonion

• Narcosis: And so, we come to me at last, better late than never the saying goes....

• Leviathan: Didn't mean to bore you.

• Narcosis: Not at all, not at all. It's been rather refreshing to see you, my Teragen colleagues, pontificate endlessly about our self-worth. It's nice to see that we all take ourselves so seriously.

• Shrapnel: Listen, what we're discussing is important and serious, your bloody attitude drives me nuts. This is not some party, but you and Raoul treat it as such.

• Orzaiz: Just because I play the game with the baselines doesn't mean I think what we are doing is not critical. Narcosis' "attitude," as you call it, is refreshing, not to mention more constructive than your own. I'm sorry that you take exception to my baseline romances, Allison, but redheads have never been my type.

• Shrapnel: Bugger off! This isn't just about you.

• Narcosis: No, Shrapnel, it's about me, right now, or it's supposed to be, if we could stay on topic....

• Apostle: The woman has a point, we've all had a chance to speak, and she was invited to our roundtable by Divis Mal himself.

Party of the Century

• Narcosis: Thanks. I'm sure some of you wonder what I'm doing here, why the media's "Dark Queen" sits among you.... For those of you asking yourself that question, I have a question for you: Why not? What makes me less "Terat" than the rest of you? Sure I deal with baselines, even encourage N! to follow me around — what's the point of being nova if



Estimated Power Levels

Strength: 2
Intellect: 7
Speed: 3
Offense: 4
Defense: 4
Versatility: 7

The Apothecary

Birth Name: Altaz Zia

Date of Birth: November 13, 1963

Place of Origin: Budapest, Hungary

Occupation: Scientist, taint theoretician

Archetype: Portent (second stage)

Powers: Next to the Mathematician's, Zia's intellect and detachment know no equal in the Teragen. Having emerged from the Chrysalis, Zia has developed powers that allow him to manipulate biological specimens. He operates and experiments on them without the need for scalpels and the like. Additionally, The Apothecary can extend his control to the genetic level where he can manipulate the building blocks of life — DNA

Background: The diminutive Zia is not so much the head of the Harvesters as their keeper. A gifted scientist in the field of bioengineering, Zia was a researcher for Horizon Pharmaceuticals, a corporation with ties to the Triton Foundation. It was Zia who proposed using nova "specimens" to advance science, but he unexpectedly be-

came fascinated by them. He began to understand what they represented — perfection — and, consequently, came to regard baselines as petty and flawed. In 2001, he made a startling discovery: Taint was not a problem but the key to unlocking novas' potential, and with this, he erupted. Cold, analytical and pragmatic, Zia hid his eruption from his co-workers but used Horizon's resources to carry out more research into aberration. Diverting funds, he founded Heartland, a massive research facility in the Midwest and set up shop as The Apothecary, dividing his time between Horizon and Heartland. He also made contact with the Teragen roundtable at this time.

By 2004, Triton noticed something was odd, but they could not put a finger on it until T2M Americas rooted Zia out. Zia survived, but the investigation damaged Horizon's reputation and Triton cut its ties. It did not matter, by this time Zia had stolen as much data as he needed from Triton.

we can't take advantage of it? Let the monkeys — I prefer faithful devotees — frolic at my every step. Revolution and its concomitant violence are not the only tools to "open the monkey's eyes," Shrapnel. If we have them testifying to our superiority, in addition to espousing that belief ourselves, where's the conflict? Where's the need for bloodshed in the revolution? There is none! It's over, and we've won. And if it involves a few parties along the way, then so much the better.

- Sin-Eater: These are just excuses to justify your dissolute and extravagant lifestyle — there's more, you know, to our cause than gratuitous sex and violence.

- Narcosis: And what's that? Yes, I believe I'm — sorry — we're superior to baselines, that we are the greatest thing to happen since, well since the first cell divided. But that doesn't mean we can't have fun. The Pandaimonion and I are out there living *The Null Manifesto* while the bunch of you hide behind it. We listened to what Mal had to say, and it rang true, but instead of dressing up in red and gold robes, or painting a NV on our chests, we just did what we wanted — to follow our own rules. Apostle is right; we're the new gods, divinity incarnate — duh! — but why should we be bound by tired old baseline ethics? We were given a great gift, but what we do with it is up to us. Some of you are so entrenched in fighting against injustice that you fail to see that we're becoming just like Utopia and T2M, only crankier and less unified.

- Mathematician: And why "Pandaimonion?" Why the media?

- Narcosis: Why not? It has a hell of a ring to it, doesn't it? Actually, I owe that to Divis. He came up with it during a conversation we had in Cuba, and I thought it sounded good then. It's Greek for "place of all gods or demons," or something like that. I toyed around with it, and it stuck. My publicist at Pantheon Productions said it worked and made it into an ad campaign. We're releasing a new fashion line around the name this fall, and the preorders are already through the roof. And it's a good idea. Why? Because the Teragen needs cash, and it gets it — lots of it — from baselines. How do you think we paid for this banquet? They want to be just like us, even if the closest they can come is wearing a T-shirt with Leviathan's face across the front.

- Leviathan: Do those come in XXXXXXXXXL?



Narcosis and Divis Mal meeting in Havana, Cuba (June 2005) months before Mal issued *The Null Manifesto* and his rise to infamy. It's widely suspected that Narcosis, a public member of the Teragen, and Mal were acquaintances before her own rise as a media figure. Rumors persist that Mal was her first agent.

• Narcosis: I'll see what I can do. But wait, there's more. Thanks to the investment of a wealthy backer named Orzaiz, we'll be opening a chain of stores across the country to sell nova-designed clothing and all things Teragen. It's called the Divis Mall.

• Leviathan: Oh, jeez....

• Narcosis: Yes, it really is a terrible pun, but the focus groups I ran it by loved it. We have stores opening up in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Seattle, San Francisco, Montreal, Toronto, London, Paris and Sydney. Furthermore, Pandaimonion is lodging a law suit against Project Utopia for putting our faces, particularly Divis' and Geryon's, on toys without licensing our images. If anyone's going to make money from the likenesses of Teragen members, it's going to be the Teragen. They don't have a legal leg to stand on. We're going to make a fortune from their arrogance. Their lawyers are already trying to settle out of court. But I digress....

To each of my followers, Pandaimonion means something different. Being nova is about freedom, and being Teragen is about discovering that freedom. So what if a few of us "poseurs" play the roles of demons and monsters, of Byronic icons giving pubescent teenagers wet dreams, or experiencing the rush of being a serial killer, or suave, jet-set royalty? No one thing makes us Pandaimonion; it's a belief, it's saying: "I'm nova and my destiny is mine to choose... damn be all who get in my way."

From internal Directive memo, February 2008

Pantheon Productions' (PP) ties to the Teragen go deeper than we originally estimated, and while this may not be an immediate problem, it is something we will eventually have to take action against. I've prepared a quick briefing on PP for your information.

Most people recognize Pantheon as one of the leading entertainment powerhouses, rivaling N! in terms of volume — we even suspect both entities are somehow connected. PP is also more than this; its corporate influence spans a number of industries, from research facilities in Japan, to pharmaceuticals in the USA and banking and finance in Italy and France.

Parties unknown founded PP in 2005, and while it has a board of directors, who really pulls the strings is a mystery. Divis Mal himself could be the big boss, but it is more likely that media sensation Narcosis is behind it. After all, PP and Narcosis seem to have been tied together since the get go. All of her major films (both erotic and commercial) are produced by Pantheon.

While it is hard to prove anything at this stage — what follows is all speculation, but if you want to pass it along as fact, it would serve our purposes — PP is a potential danger to our countries' collective security. A number of reports seem to suggest that PP is heavily involved in drug trafficking, allegations supported by a rash of violence in Bogotá, Columbia directed at PP holdings. More disturbing is the possibility that PP is one of the leading manufacturers of soma — a fact that makes PP a danger to baselines and novas alike.



Leviathan

Birth Name: Leonardo de la Rocha

Date of Birth: August 5, 1986

Place of Origin: Bronx, New York, USA

Occupation: Harvester leader

Archetype: Monster (second stage)

Power: Leviathan is perfectly amphibious, and his elongated tail and heavily muscled spine grant him both unparalleled speed in the water and quick snake-like ground movement. Ten feet long, Leviathan is strong enough to lift tanks and extremely durable. He also possesses astounding regenerative abilities.

On land, Leviathan exudes a thick gel-like coating that prevents dehydration and makes him very slippery. He can also exude a secondary coating filled with free-floating nematocysts, which inject a paralytic agent into bare flesh. Leviathan often coats his hands with this toxin and tries to smear it on opponents.

Leviathan possesses no eyes but "sees" through a highly acute sense of smell and electromagnetic variances on his skin.

Background: When novas emerged across the world, not everyone greeted them as saviors. Despite

the Pope's edict, Teresa de la Rocha, a devout Catholic, still saw novas as the work of Satan. Living in Venice, Teresa was present when Leonardo, her American-born 14-year-old son, erupted into a reptilian hybrid. Rather than give him the help he needed, she subjected him to an austere treatment of isolation, daily religious readings and corporal punishment. Leonardo truly believed himself evil and eventually acted the part his mother forced upon him. Unbeknownst to either, Leonardo was wracked with guilt, but his astounding regenerative abilities allowed him to control its manifestation.

Eventually, Teresa could no longer handle her son. He had grown to fill his bedroom, he defied her more openly, and she no longer recognized her child within the beast that taunted her. At her wit's end, she set her home on fire and disappeared into the night. Leonardo survived by beating down his walls and diving into the Venetian canals. He has lived there ever since.

Although Leonardo came to realize he was not demonic, his taint has altered him to the point of being abjectly inhuman. He chose the name Leviathan to spite his mother, and though he looks and plays the part of a monster, he is not. Still lurking within the labyrinth of Venetian canals, Leviathan is the de facto leader of the Harvesters' radical chapter.

Estimated Power Levels:

Strength: 9

Intellect: 4

Speed: 7

Offense: 7

Defense: 7

Versatility: 5

From: Dykus, Mike <Mdykus@door.net>
To: moma <moma@art.com>
Date: Wednesday, April 28, 2008 3:10 AM
Subject: Get the Goods
Trip,

This address better be safe, or I'll hunt you down, you OpNet freak.

Listen, I need you to get me the goods on Narcosis. Yeah I know, don't ask questions either. Man, I'm just getting tired of her pulling all the strings. Pandaimonion may have been her idea, but her mind is too wrapped up in getting "in" among the Teragen. We're just getting tired of her.

Part of it's this obsessive thing she has with Mal. She seems to think that somehow having his kid will fix her, will make her one of the "in crowd." But he's not really the breeding type, if you know what I mean, and so she's getting more and more obsequious to him, but it doesn't seem to sink in. See what I am getting at? Look around, see what you can find, and fire it off to me. I liked her better when she was just a porn star.

BTW, think you can score me some more XWF tickets? Ringside? I want to be there for the Superbeast-Terminatrix grudge match. That should be pretty mind-boggling.

Boom-Boom

Useful Fodder

- Epoch: Don't you think that attracting all these baselines to your cause might be trouble?
- Narcosis: I know that. Some are just fodder, but even fodder can be useful. Maybe they have friends in high places, or they're handy at electronics or just good in bed. No need to worry, they're just happy following me. Some are disposable, tools to be used. Some are so wrapped up in their baseline mentality that they're no use to us. I don't want you to think I have no goals, that we're just here to have fun. It serves as a good cover at the very least — and on Saturday nights there's always a good party. However, those who make it into my inner circle, so to speak, do so because they help the cause. I may disagree in particulars with you, but in spirit, I know what we're doing is right. Why bash baselines around when you can make them into docile sheep with the right word here and the flash of skin there?
- Mathematician: She has a point. Perhaps we should be paying more attention to how our movement interacts with the world at large.
- Orzaiz: If I may, I took the liberty of preparing some documentation about that very subject. I suggest we retire to our quarters and peruse it at our leisure. I for one have discussed enough politics and revolution for a single evening....



Estimated Power Levels

Strength: 2
Intellect: 4
Speed: 3
Offense: 4
Defense: 5
Versatility: 7

Narcosis

Birth Name: Angela de la Cruz
Date of Birth: October 31, 1979
Place of Origin: Los Angeles, California, USA
Occupation: Actress
Archetype: Marvel (first stage)

Powers: Narcosis is a siren for the Nova Age. While she cannot change the way she looks physically, she can affect the way people perceive her, molding herself to their expectations and desires and making herself alluring, beautiful and utterly irresistible. Her sweet charisma extends over crowds and through the media, allowing her to control and manipulate baselines without them ever knowing it.

Background: None know, but Angela — a beautiful but small-time actress in Hollywood — did not erupt naturally. Instead, she spent three years, from 2001 until 2004, searching for any means to become one of the living gods. She tried everything

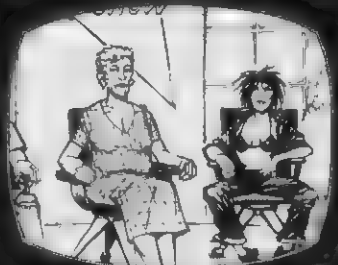
— drugs, mysticism, even violence and murder — but it was only after a dominatrix tortured her almost to the point of death that she erupted. Once she healed, Angela emerged into the world media arena and went on to create her world-famous public image, which attracted even Divis Mal to her.

Teragen and the World

Broadcast of *The Monika Show*, syndicated, May 14, 2008



MONIKA: WE'RE BACK FROM COMMERCIAL. IF YOU'RE JUST JOINING US, WELCOME TO A VERY SPECIAL EPISODE OF THE MONIKA SHOW. TODAY, WE'RE TALKING TO PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN WANT TO JOIN THE TERAGEN. OUR NEXT GUEST IS MARY-BETH, A CONCERNED MOTHER WHOSE 13-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, CASSIE, WANTS TO JOIN THE TERAGEN. WELCOME MARY-BETH AND CASSIE.
[APPLAUSE AND JEERS]



MONIKA: THANKS FOR COMING TO THE SHOW.

MARY-BETH: THANKS, YOU. I HONESTLY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, Y'KNOW?



MONIKA: TELL US, IN YOUR OWN WORDS

MARY-BETH: WELL, OVER THE LAST YEAR, CASSIE'S BEEN INTERESTED IN THE TERAGEN. SHE HIDES ALL THEIR LITERATURE IN HER ROOM — LIKE I WON'T FIND IT — AND SHE USES THE OPNET TO GO ONTO ALL THESE

ILLEGAL SITES.

[AUDIENCE GROANS]



MONIKA: HAVE YOU TRIED BLOCKING THOSE SITES FROM HER?

MARY-BETH: OF COURSE I TRIED MONIKA, BUT SHE'S GOOD WITH COMPUTERS AND I AIN'T. I TRIED RESTRICTING IT TO SCHOOLWORK AND ALL, BUT I STILL CATCH HER GOING ONTO THOSE SITES. SHE CAN DO IT FROM SCHOOL, AND SHE'S GOT FRIENDS WHO CAN HELP HER TOO. I MEAN, WHAT IF SHE ATTRACTS A NUTCASE LIKE GERVON OR BOOM-BOOM TO OUR HOUSE? SHE DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT THESE CHARACTERS MEAN BUSINESS. SHE JUST THINKS IT'S COOL.



MONIKA: SO, SHE WANTS TO BE A PART OF THE TERAGEN, BUT SHE'S NOT EVEN NOVA?

MARY-BETH: THAT'S RIGHT! AN SHE NEARLY KILLED HERSELF ONCE TRYING TO GET POWERS.

[AUDIENCE GROANS]



THE COUNSELOR TOLD ME SHE PROBABLY GOT THAT IDEA FROM THE OPNET. THEY GOT ALL THESE SITES FOR, Y'KNOW... ERUPTING.



MONIKA: CASSIE? YOU LOOK LIKE
A INTELLIGENT YOUNG WOMAN,
WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO JOIN
THE TERAGEN?



CASSIE: BECAUSE THEY'RE THE BEST
THEY DON'T TAKE [BLEEP] FROM
NOBODY AND KICK THE [BLEEP] OUT
OF ANYBODY WHO GETS IN THEIR
WAY. DIVIS MAL SAID—

[AUDIENCE JEERS]



MARY-BETH: SEE WHAT I MEAN? SHE
NEVER USED PROFANITY BEFORE.

MONIKA: CASSIE? ARE YOU SAYING YOU
CONDONE MURDER?

CASSIE: NO! BUT THE TERAGEN TALK
ABOUT THAT.

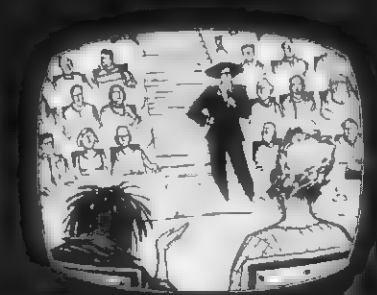


MARY-BETH: YES THEY ARE! THEY KILLED
THAT MAYOR IN MIAMI AND BLEW UP A
CHURCH IN TEXAS.

CASSIE: IT WAS TAMPA, AND NOT ALL OF
THEM DO THAT. AND THEY DIDN'T BLOW
UP THAT CHURCH IN TEXAS.



MONIKA: HOW DO YOU KNOW THEY
DIDN'T CASSIE?



CASSIE: IT SAID SO ON THE TERAGEN
OPNET HOME SITE, AND WHAT
HAPPENED TO THAT MAYOR, IT WAS
IN SELF-DEFENSE.

MARY-BETH: OH, HONEY, WAKE-UP.
THEY'RE ONLY SAYING THAT TO LURE
YOUNG KIDS LIKE YOU AWAY FROM HOME.



CASSIE: NO THEY'RE NOT, YOU'RE JUST AFRAID OF THE TRUTH. MAL SAYS SOCIETY'S TOO AFRAID OF NOVAS BECAUSE NOVAS ARE BETTER THAN EVERYBODY ELSE. MAYBE YOU DON'T WANT TO ADMIT IT, BUT HE'S RIGHT. THEY'VE GIVEN US CURES FOR DISEASES AND CLEANED UP THE OCEANS. THEY FLY. THEY DO COOL STUFF WITH ENERGY. THEY'RE STRONGER THAN WE ARE. THEY'RE SMARTER THAN WE ARE. AND WE'RE JUST IN THE WAY. IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS. WHY CAN'T YOU SEE IT?



MONIKA: WE HAVE A QUESTION FROM THE AUDIENCE. YES, SIR.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1: YEAH, I JUST WANTED TO SAY TO MARY-BETH THAT IF YOUR DAUGHTER WANTS TO JOIN THE TERAGEN, SHE'LL LEARN HER LESSON WHEN THEY

AUDIENCE ERUPTS INTO APPLAUSE



MONIKA: THANK YOU, SIR. ANYBODY ELSE? YOU, MA'AM.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2: THIS IS FOR CASSIE, IS IT? — AND THAT OLDER BOY THERE, MICHAEL. HERE'S THE TRUTH HONEY, THE TERAGEN'S A FRONT FOR A SLAVE-TRADE RING. I HAD A COUSIN WHOSE TEENAGE GIRL WAS TAKEN BY THEM. NEXT THING WE HEAR, SHE'S IN NEW YORK, AN' THEY'RE FORCING HER TO MAKE pornos.



MICHAEL: COME ON, THAT'S AN URBAN LEGEND. I'VE HEARD IT 100 TIMES.



AUDIENCE MEMBER 2: BECAUSE IT'S THE TRUTH! IT'S HAPPENING EVERYWHERE. TERAGEN'S JUST A BUNCH OF CHILD-MOLESTERS.



MONIKA: WE HAVE TO BREAK FOR A COMMERCIAL, BUT WHEN WE RETURN, WE'LL MEET EDWIN, A YOUNG MAN WHO RAN AWAY FROM HOME AND JOINED THE TERAGEN WHEN HE WAS ONLY 13!

THEME MUSIC AND AUDIENCE APPLAUSE

N!ertainment

N!terview

N! the news

N!sight

N!tre nous

N!ternet

N!tv

fun N! games

help!

awards

legal stuff

search

find!

contact

N

the news

"Man on the Street,"
News Station KEZX,
Houston, May 15, 2008

• Interviewer: Excuse me? Can I get your reactions to *The Monika Show*?



• James "Bo" Waggoner: Yeah, I saw it. Teragen believe they're superior to us just because they've got powers. But as long as boys like Pax and Makara are out there fighting these terrorists, they'll never win. And I'm sure there ain't a single American who ain't ready to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Pax and give the Teragen a backside full of buckshot.

• Susan Levinson: I didn't realize the Teragen was becoming so dangerous. When that one mother told me how they stole her daughter, I just cried. I've got a little girl myself. How am I going to be able to protect her if she erupts and they come for her?



• Alair Parkers: As a nova... that's right, I can fly and manipulate wind patterns. As I was saying, as a nova, the Teragen's giving us a bad reputation. I've still got a baseline family whom I love and who loves me in return. I would never do anything to hurt them. And if the Teragen threatened my friends, family or neighbors, I'd be the first to fight them.

• Kim Kip: I thought the show was a load of sensationalist bull. The Teragen's fake. They're a bunch of actors paid by Utopia to make T2M look good. They're like that team that always loses against the Globetrotters. It's like wrestling or the Village People, y'know? Contrived all the way.



• Hank Cappa: The kid's right. It's a hard pill to swallow, but novas are probably the new dominant species on the planet. That's how nature works. It just bruises our collective baseline ego to admit it. Fightin' it's just like swimming up-river, know what I'm saying?

N!tertainment

N!terview

N! the news

N!sight

N!tre nous

N!ternet

N!TV

fun N! games



• **Zachery Yewlins:** What more does the government need? The Teragen admitted killing that mayor in Tampa and attacking the UN. I just know they were the ones who aced Slider too. So why is the government and Utopia sitting on their butts about this? It sounds fishy to me. I think they're not doing anything because Utopia wants us scared and needing them.

• **Claire Anderson:** Yo, Pax, if you're listening? Find the Teragen and kick their asses till your shoe's brown!



• **Catherine Mayver:** I don't agree with their methods. I mean, if you're trying to win public support for your cause, then why go killing innocent people? I think the Teragen's making the same mistakes as those Palestine and Irish people by using terrorism to solve their grievances.

• **Antony Giffon:** I thought it was a great show. I hadn't realized that Teragen was short for Terror Generation.



• **Marcus Muhammad:** My grandfather was in the Nation of Islam and actually met Malcolm X once. He told me to always respect the struggle, 'cause one day it could be you struggling. More power to the Teragen. Lord knows this society has got enough prejudice to drive any man to action.

help!

awards

legal stuff

search

find!

contact us

Confidential emails, May 14, 2008

From: Penetrator
To: Geryon
Subject: The Monika Show
Hey Geryon,

Are you watching this sensationalist crap on the Monika Show. We're being turned into the new goblins. Next they'll be saying we steal children's breath or hide beneath bridges and whack people across the head so we can suck their bone-marrow.

Penetrator

From: Geryon
To: Penetrator
Subject: Re: The Monika Show
I can't think of a better hobby, can you? ;)

Teragen and Society

Intercepted OpNet e-mails

Notes from Supervising Agent: The authors are Teragen members Geryon, Leviathan, Penetrator and Reflex. Unable to trace encoded addresses, but we did seize one of the relay stations this was being routed through. Messages found in buffer. Dates are indicated as May 15, 2008.

From: Reflex
To: Geryon, Leviathan, Penetrator
Subject: Man on the Street Interviews
Hey Folks,

A local station just aired a segment on what people thought about us. There's a lot of misinformation flying around. What can we do about it?

Reflex

"Sorry, didn't mean to hit you. It was a reflex."

From: Penetrator
To: Reflex, Leviathan, Geryon
Subject: Re: Man on the Street Interviews

Orzaiz is supposed to be doing damage control, but I can't fault him for public opinion. Society is scared of us. The press paints us as terrorists, and the tabloids play us for perverts or monsters. You hear it enough times, it sounds like the truth. We'll see how things go once Pandaimonion gets rolling.

Penetrator

"Infecting the world with love."

From: Leviathan
To: Reflex, Penetrator, Geryon
Subject: Re: Man on the Street Interviews

Hey, some of us are monsters. It doesn't matter what people think. If it did, then we might as well join Utopia and help them clean up the world. There's better PR in that. We're doing what we do regardless of what society thinks of us. Let them be scared; it means they'll get out of our way quicker.

Leviathan

"Watching the Teletubbies while listening to old Rob Zombie CDs is a trip."

From: Reflex
To: Penetrator, Leviathan, Geryon
Subject: Re: Man on the Street Interviews
Yeah, but aren't you worried they'll try fighting us?
Reflex

From: Geryon
To: Reflex, Leviathan, Penetrator
Subject: Re: Man on the Street Interviews

They'll never fight us. Utopia taught the world that novas were the answers to all their problems and that includes the Teragen. Society will expect Utopia to deal with us. Besides, without fear, society will never give us what we want. The minute they aren't afraid of us, then we've lost our edge. Sure, it means the stakes are higher, but it has never been said that struggle didn't come at some cost.

Geryon

From: Leviathan
To: Reflex, Penetrator, Geryon
Subject: Re: Man on the Street Interviews

Good point Geryon. I don't care what the baselines think of us. I don't want them dead necessarily, but frankly, I think they should start pulling their own weight, know what I mean? I'm tired of seeing our erupted brothers and sisters treated like servants meant to clean up the mess left by their mundane masters. I say baseline society needs a swift kick in the ass every so often to remind them that they aren't holding the reins. Utopia's been pretty good at diverting attention to us. Watch what happens when this Slider incident gets revealed in public. Let's see how quickly the baseline sheep turn us into the heroes for knowing better.

Leviathan

From: Penetrator
To: Reflex, Leviathan, Geryon
Subject: Re: Man on the Street Interviews

Aren't you being a tad optimistic Leviathan? Society's easily distracted, and Utopia's good at playing the Houdini of misdirection. The Slider incident will eventually get outed, sure, but Utopia will turn around and claim that these were the actions of renegades working on our behalf. Society will fall for that "I didn't inhale/I didn't ejaculate" crap each and every time. It's a lot easier to forgive and forget than to remember and learn.

Penetrator

"The only way out is through."

From: Reflex
To: Penetrator, Leviathan, Geryon
Subject: Re: Man on the Street Interviews

We have to make sure they don't forget then. The baseline masses have a notoriously short attention span, so we've got to remind them we're here. Whether it's through Orzaiz and his popularity gambits or Geryon's attacks on our enemies, we have to be a constant presence.

Reflex

From: Penetrator
To: Reflex, Leviathan, Geryon
Subject: Re: Man on the Street Interviews

My only problem with that is that we become a stereotype. We commit the acts they expect of us to remind them we're still around. It's a vicious circle.

Penetrator

"There is no good. There is no evil. There are only consequences."

From: Geryon
To: Reflex, Leviathan, Penetrator
Subject: Re: Man on the Street Interviews

It doesn't particularly matter. Every time we surface, no matter what we do or why, the press will be the one painting our portraits. So if they're going to paint whatever picture they want, we may as well continue doing what we're doing. I like Orzaiz, but his agenda is fruitless. No amount of PR is going to change what people think of us; to most of them, we're molesters, kidnappers, terrorists and rapists. Well that's just fine, because I'm not interested in alleviating baseline fears or winning their respect. Independence isn't about giving. It's about taking. It's time we realized that and stopped playing around.

Geryon

Teragen and the Aberrants

Personal letter from Bene "Bounty" Manata to James "Geryon" Booth

Dear James,

I understand your hatred for T2M and Utopia, for I too have seen more than my share of the desolation they bring. The pain we have seen and felt is with us forever as cancerous memories. I beg you to reconsider your position, however. Regardless of what Corbin did in the past, he is like you and me now, a fugitive. There is strength in numbers and there is greater strength in knowledge. The Aberrants could be the missing link to bring Utopia to its knees. Surely your hatred for one man cannot blind you to the greater good that will come of a Teragen-Aberrant alliance. If we can bring both groups together, then both groups can prosper from each other's strengths. Your desire for retribution endangers us all.

Many of our younger Terats look to you as an example. Your fury makes you a passionate, even natural, leader. By exercising self-control in this matter, you prove yourself a great man, for nobody can subsist on violence alone. Once you put aside your hatred and allow us peace with the Aberrants, the others will follow in your footsteps. Without you, any hope we have of gaining profound insight into Utopia's dark underbelly will be lost. If not for yourself, then allow the Teragen the chance to learn from these would-be allies. Corbin is not the Aberrants; he is only part of it. Will you judge the entire movement solely on the hatred you feel for one man?

Warmest regards,

—Bene

Personal letter from Geryon to Bounty

Listen Bounty,

Do not presume that you know me. You do not. What I saw did not come from my eyes. What I saw burned itself into my skull like a brand. Those damn telepathic images carried an empathic slug with them. This magic bullet digs deeper into my brain everyday I'm alive; it'll never go away; it'll never weaken.

My hatred for the Aberrants isn't with Corbin, though making him scream would be a big, fat juicy bonus. My beef is with the entire organization. From what I know, many of their agents are still within Utopia, allowing this inhumanity against novas to continue. They're nothing more than a bunch of ostracized children who feel betrayed. They're not doing this for the right reasons, for the betterment of novas everywhere; they're doing it because they have problems with Utopia. Aberrants are either self-proclaimed heroes whose apple-pie ideals were eaten or hostile postal workers getting ready to lock and load. Either way, they're a speed bump on our road.

Allow me to ask you this, dear Bounty: If the Aberrants know so much, then why have they not stepped forward to let the world know what they do? They're hiding like scorned lovers looking for revenge and that's ill-reasoned. My concern is protecting novas from those who would abuse them, and that includes the Aberrants.

Your intentions may be noble, in fact I'm quite certain that they are, but that does not mean theirs are. This is not a game and the enemy of my enemy most assuredly is not my friend. The more quickly you learn that, the more quickly you'll realize the Aberrants are no better than Utopia.

—Geryon

N!ertainment

N!terview

N! the news

N!sight

N!tre nous

N!ternet

N!TV

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awards

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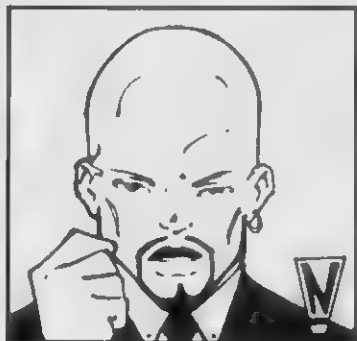
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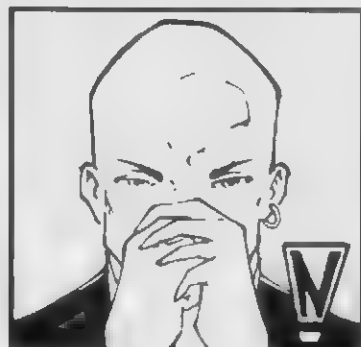
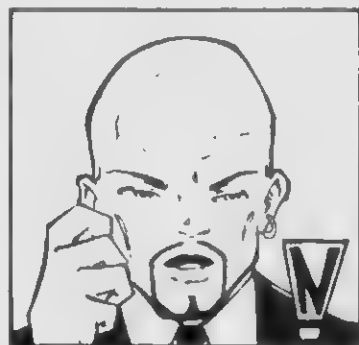
N!terview

Excerpts from N! Documentary "The Man Without a Mask: An Interview with Count Orzaiz," first aired December 16, 2007



"Society has been duped into believing we are its enemies. Our struggle is not with baselines, however. Our struggle rests with the hypocrisy flowing from the fountains of Project Utopia. Utopia is turning novas into a slave race because baselines are more comfortable thinking of us as controllable. That is why society is afraid of the Teragen. We represent an independent movement of thought and ethics that frightens people. Society shouldn't fear us. They should fear Utopia and recognize them for what they really are: fascists hiding behind smiling masks....

"...The Utopian program to use us to fix the world's problems is nothing short of slavery, which reduces the exceptional to the lowest common denominator. Would Europeans or North Americans accept slavery or having their right for self-determination stripped from them, simply because others will benefit? Would you allow me to come to you, hand you a shovel and tell you to dig my pool? No. Why? Because you have freedom of choice. Why is that any different for us? Would you deny me that choice? Utopia does. Anyone who doesn't join Project Utopia is treated like a pariah because they've chosen to exercise their free will. We are suddenly a threat because we will not follow blindly....



"...No matter how you chose to interpret Utopia's actions, there is no denying they are pursuing an agenda of extermination and subjugation. The Rashoud facilities are our ghettos, sterilization clinics or, worse, our extermination camps. Rather than bettering those touched by taint, Utopia rushes them away, never to be seen again. I find this frighteningly similar to the Nazis' sterilization practices. What happens when they expand their pursuits to include the extermination of those who don't fit into their ideological mold? Don't forget that one individual's utopia is another's dystopia; it's all about who's being served and who is in

the position of doing the serving. Once Utopia begins to spread its well-funded, friendly fascism to the baseline population — and it's only a matter of time — where will it stop...?

"...Regardless what Utopia has you believe, they are not your friends and they most certainly are not mine. Were I blessed with children, I would tell them to fear Utopia, for they are the monsters, not I. Why are Utopia's upper echelons open only to baselines? Why aren't their records accessible if what they do is essentially global charity work? The answer to this and most other questions rests with the fact that Project Utopia has ulterior motives. And once someone has a hidden agenda, the truth is the last thing they'll ever offer you, unless it suits their purposes...



"...I'm not saying we cannot work together with baselines. I am saying we cannot do so while Project Utopia is around. They are manipulating the facts and portraying us as your enemies. We aren't your enemies, but we aren't your slaves or even your peers. If you want help, then ask us. If we choose to accept, then work alongside us. Slavery was abolished centuries ago. It is time for society to get with the times...."

N!ertainment

N!terview

N! the news

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The Directive

Transcript of meeting between unknown Teragen member and Director Wong Lee of the Directive in Mr. Lee's office, June 1, 2008

- Lee: Who the devil...?
- Terat: Don't be frightened Mr. Lee. I'm a hologram; I mean you no harm. I was hoping we could speak.
- Lee: I see. Um, who are you?
- Terat: That's not important right now. Just know two things. One: This face is not my own. Two: My associate, who is providing me with this electronic link, has currently rerouted your emergency page into the electronic ether. I can see you through that camera up there, but you may continue addressing my hologram form, if it makes you feel better.
- Lee: What do you want?
- Terat: Oh, please, Mr. Lee, I don't want this meeting to be confrontational. So far both the Directive and the Teragen have done nothing but butt heads over ideological differences.
- Lee: Teragen? You call political assassination and the battle on the UN's steps "ideological differences?" Your movement has killed people and threatened the entire UN General Assembly. You're criminals and terrorists as far as we're concerned.
- Terat: I had this very argument with a colleague of mine who can see the future. We debated the issues of the meeting and he made the exact same points as you — verbatim I might add — just to prepare me. So let's dispense with the posturing and get to the crux of my presence. I wish to propose a cease-fire with the Directive.
- Lee: What?
- Terat: Well, you see, the Teragen initially discounted the Directive as lackeys of Project Utopia. We saw your role to monitor Utopia and novas as a red herring, a ploy to calm public fears about the Project's meteoric rise to power. In essence, we believed you were going to be about as effective as assigning the town pervert to guard the local virgin.
- Lee: Nice. What changed?
- Terat: More like who died. With Slider's murder and your investigation of Project Utopia's culpability in the matter, we — the Teragen that is — have been impressed with your pursuit of the truth. Even when Project Utopia pointed the accusing finger at us, you didn't sway from the scent.
- Lee: Go on. You have my attention.
- Terat: I propose a trade between the Directive and Teragen. In exchange for certain considerations, we will supply you with legitimate evidence on Project Utopia's dark underbelly.
- Lee: What considerations?
- Terat: I've already downloaded a small list of requests into your computer. None of it is illegal, and you'll have the time to consider it with your colleagues. I know how

much you dislike being put on the spot. As a show of goodwill, however, I will share this tidbit in the hopes it brings both groups closer together. You have agents in Calcutta who have been watching our little starlet Narcosis. We spotted them last week. I've stopped some of my more zealous colleagues from taking them out, but you may want to remove your agents. I cannot guarantee their continued safety.

• Lee: Thank you. I wouldn't get your hopes up about the alliance, however....

• Terat: I know, we're terrorists and you are defenders of the national interest blah blah blah blah. Whatever. I do ask you to consider something, though. First world nations have intelligence agencies. In second world nations these same groups are called the secret police. In third world nations, they become freedom fighters. Think of us as your third world colleagues Mr. Lee. Perhaps that will ease your decision. Goodbye.

DeVries and the Elites

Videotape received by Helene Courtmanche, widow to Terat Allen "Battle-Cry" Courtmanche, who died while assaulting DeVries offices in New York.

Hello Mrs. Courtmanche,

My name is Raoul Orzaiz, and I was a colleague of your late husband. I know this seems troubling to you, but if you'll bear with me, I can at least offer you some words to ease your grief. When Allen erupted and became Battle-Cry, you supported and loved him. Even when he joined the Teragen, though he would not involve you in our movement for fear of endangering you, he still returned that love. I know his death must be a shock, but I think you deserve to know just what he fought and died for.

As you know, Allen was lost during an attack on the New York offices of the DeVries Agency, but this was not the blind terrorism the news portrayed. Allen attacked DeVries because it, along with Utopia, epitomizes the inequalities of society and injustices perpetrated against novas. The owners of DeVries are glorified pimps. They turn novas like your husband into commodities, thereby devaluing our spirit and our very nature. Your husband was not attacking innocent novas, he was trying to put a stop to the injustices of DeVries. Much like social workers in the Philippines who risked their lives to free child-prostitutes, Allen died for the noblest cause of all, the liberation of others.

If it brings you any consolation Mrs. Courtmanche, Allen's sacrifice was not in vain. Following his death, two elites with DeVries joined our cause. Allen's attempts to liberate them touched them even though they did not believe themselves imprisoned. Allen's death was the catalyst.

DeVries claims it offers novas the freedom of self-determination, but that is far from the truth. DeVries traffics in misery and uses novas as its tools. Your husband saw this truth and refused to allow others to fall into this evil scheme.

SETTING

As novae, we all have a right to self-expression and self-determination. We are not proxies, and we are not tools. Your husband sacrificed himself for that belief.

Once again Mrs. Courtmanche, I grieve with you, and I am sorry I can not be there to share your pain. Know this, however, your husband did not die in vain. I only hope this knowledge helps you in the months to come.

The Second Coming

COMMUNIQUÉ DOUBLE-ENCRYPTED

Communiqué double-encrypted with Navajo Daedalus 3; dated 09/13/2006

Director,

I believe we may have a small problem on our hands. I don't think we have cause for alarm yet, but as of yesterday afternoon we've lost all contact with Subject Alpha-001. I've got our best working on projections and analysis, furthermore, two teams are investigating (one is ours, the other a Utopia team, unaware of Proteus), but the prognosis is not good. If Subject Alpha-001 is undergoing another metamorphosis, we can then assume the Teragen will be gearing up its activities. This is not a problem in and of itself, since we can use their growing radicalism to start a smear campaign; assigning blame to Teragen radicals should not be overly difficult should the need arise to deflect attention either from our operations or Utopia's.

The problem arises once Subject Alpha-001 re-surfaces from the metamorphosis, what the Teragen calls Chrysalis. With him out of the picture, we predict the Teragen will grow divided — splintered — into various factions jostling with each other and unable to reconcile their views and methodologies. Subject Alpha-001's return, estimated sometime between 2010 to 2013, will undoubtedly galvanize the Teragen and be a threat to our society. Although there are current predictions of an internal schism developing upon his return, this could only help in strengthening the Teragen in the end — unifying the movement against Utopia and, ultimately against us.

This is why, Director, I suggest we strike at the Teragen now, with Subject Alpha-001 out of the picture. With the right resources and planning, I believe we can deal the Teragen a devastating blow, weakening the movement or destroying it outright. Director, things are bound to get worse if nothing is done to stop the Teragen

COMMUNIQUÉ DOUBLE-ENCRYPTED

Communiqué double-encrypted with Navajo Daedalus 3; dated 09/14/2006

Nyeung,

I understand your concerns, my dear friend. Your analysis is correct, and while the Teragen stand to become a bigger problem upon Subject Alpha-001's return, we still have our uses for it. I am authorizing you to continue your investigations in case we must act decisively, but for now, the Teragen will serve as a decoy. Besides, there is still enough time before his projected return in 2010

From the private journal of Bene "Bounty" Manata, October 17, 2007

Scripture went today to visit Mal. He seemed odd, almost impatient, but even he knows the Chrysalis takes its time — you can't rush it. When I asked about the others, he was hesitant, and I could feel him grow angry. I guess being secluded here in Africa I miss out on the day-to-day squabbles of my brothers and sisters. Deep down inside, I am glad. It lets me stay focused.

It's quiet tonight, the jungle outside is still but teeming with potential, like Mal in his Chrysalis. I'd be lying if didn't admit I long for him at night when the children are asleep. He's immaculate, powerful. I understand why Scripture goes to him so often; his power is comforting in its absolute-ness. The serenity that emanates from him is incomparable. His presence is addictive.

I can't sleep. Even from afar, even from his Chrysalis, his presence permeates the world. The children can feel him, as if he were here and they sense that he's their father — if not physically, then spiritually. When I think on it, I can imagine him. I'm not sure if I'm imagining it or if I have some manner of far sight, but when I close my eyes and extend my mind out to him, I see him, and he is pulsating with energy, with potential. His eyes are closed but his node is awake, changing right before me, a being of ultimate perfection forcing himself to evolve. Baselines can't understand him, even Terats are at odds when it comes to Mal, but to look at him is to know we are indeed the One Race.

Mal is foreboding, one could even say sublime, ineffable; to look into his eyes is to see all of infinity reduced to two brilliant emeralds. Angel. Brother. Titan. Ah, that's it, titan. There is no better word for Mal, and the Teragen is a new race of gods among humanity. We still have many trials to overcome, but Mal will lead the way, and yet, I cannot shake my feeling of unease. Even with the inhuman Harvesters I don't have this feeling. No matter how freakish they look, I can still feel that they were once human and baseline. Not with Mal. Like the children, he possesses a certain detachment, an abstract bemusement that makes him at once a visionary and a demon.

I must stop now, the children are becoming restless. Perhaps they miss him like I do.

03h45-2jun08...
VITAL SIGNS DETECTED.....
RUNNING SCAN.....
SCAN COMPLETE: subject awakening...
initializing CHRYSALIS subsystems.....
DANGER
DANGER
DANGER
chamber BREACH//containment field neutralized
SYSTEM FAILURE IMMINENT

Secure OpNet real-time voice log, June 2, 2008

- Voice One: Scripture, he's out....
- Voice Two: That's Michael. He always has been an overachiever.
- Voice One: I'm running tests, but the readings are off the charts....
- Voice Two: Sit tight Synapse. Welcome him back, explain the status quo to him. Let him know about tomorrow.
- Voice One: Done. He's already finished reading a doc I prepared, he's looking right at the sec cams, think I should go and see if he needs anything. Should I tell anyone?
- Voice Two: No. There will be time for that tomorrow. Synapse, tell him... tell him I've missed him....

Introductions

Transcript of Teragen Meeting, Day Three: June 5, 2008, Location Unknown

- Orzaiz: Well, I believe that concludes our—
- Divis Mal: All due apologies for my late arrival.
- Mathematician: Divis....
- Mal: Yes, hello. A pleasure to see you again. Most of you, anyway.
- Mathematician: But....
- Mal: Fortuitous, isn't it, that I should emerge on the eve of this meeting? I did not know it then, but I must have felt your call, your need for guidance. The time is now, as they say....

• Apostle: Before the meeting.... Your Chrysalis ended and no one told us... who knew.... If anything Mal, it is you that should have been here, to preside over this gathering, to unify us in vision and body. To show us the true way....

• Scripture: I knew, Marcel, but I understood the need for us to speak, to find our own voice for Mal to hear, cacophonous and befuddled as it is.

• Mal: Spoken like one who knows truth uncommonly well, and that, beloved Jeremiah, is both a blessing and a curse as you well know. My brothers and sisters, I have come, not because the way is lost, but because the path is now clear. I look across this table, at the core of the Teragen — some Marvels, some Portents, some Monsters — but all the One Race.

To date, you have wandered through the forest of uncertainty, novas drowning in a sea of mediocrity. Some run blindly, cower in the shadows and wait for night to devour them. Others, shackled by their perceptions, stagnate and become like the trees around them — tall, proud and potent, but unmoving, rooted in time, in understanding and in place. Destruction is but another birth. In the fires to come our numbers will diminish, but our strength will grow manifold. The world has yet to witness the One Race's true potential. Some of you counsel war; some of you counsel patience; some of you counsel baseline genocide; some of you counsel the establishment of a novarchy over the baselines. And all of you are certain that you see the true way, and yet we know, don't we, that that cannot be the case. I must confess some small disappointment with this situation. I ask for dragons and thunder and raging seraphim and I get petty, unkind, backstabbing children who snivel and squall when they do not get their way. I do not want sniveling, squalling children. I do not want toadies. I do not want worshipers. "What does he want?" you ask. "Oh, dear," scurry scurry scurry, "what could it be, what does he want? What does Divis Mal want?" I want equals. You repay your teacher poorly if you remain always students. You think that it lies in the power, and it does not lie in the power. It lies in the understanding. It lies in the enlightenment, of which only Jeremiah Scripture and Raoul Orzaiz appear to have attained any modicum. You are not the equals I have been waiting for. You are baselines with undeserved power and boorish, petty natures. When will you speak to the angels with me? When?! My gods feed me blood and mangoes, and I laugh, I weep, I dance. Your gods feed you Kool-Aid and white bread, and you crawl, you buzz and you quarrel like fractious children. I am as godlike as any being on this planet, and still, I cannot speak in a language that you can comprehend. Is this all riddles to you? It isn't meant to be. [sigh] I am understating things when I say that this is not what I had hoped to find upon my emergence.

• Scripture: Your temper is showing. Remember that you gave them a two-pronged task, Divis, and enlightenment and politics don't make particularly good bedfellows.

• Shrapnel: But we— So what would you have us do? Utopia is hurting now, the so-called Aberrants seem our best weapon against the oppressors.

• Mal: The Aberrants will indeed see the light in the fullness of time, but for now, they are young. They are rebelling, not unlike the lot of you. Should we offer asylum too soon, they will turn away, disgusted by what they've become, and they will blame us for their transformation. If, however, we offer asylum too late, their bitterness will bleed into every dealing we have with them henceforth. They are pariahs, outcasts and renegades; let circumstance rip away their dignity in its own time. Then, once they have been braised, but before they are scorched, they will come to us, and we will show them the true path of the One Race. But in response to your question, sharp-tongued Shrapnel, I would have

you turn your perceptions inward and seek what is godlike within yourself. I'm getting tired of this role. I am a visionary, a warrior and a lover of life, but unlike my father, I do not enjoy the role of teacher.

A New Direction

• Orzaiz: Divis, you know I am the first to recognize you for what you are, but before you left, we were a young movement. I do not deny the fact that I still think *The Null Manifesto* jumped the gun, but now, I understand why you did it. It brought us together, before the manifesto I would have never envisioned a gathering like this at all...

• Mal: This is why I am here, Raoul. This is a celebration, the glorious culmination of events that began years ago. I do not expect you to understand everything just yet, but let trust be the bridge that gets you across.

• Orzaiz: And that's the problem. You ask us to trust, and we do, but I foresee a slight problem here. The Teragen was once more than you and *The Null Manifesto*. It had no leader, no cohesiveness and no hope for growth, but you've given us direction and solidarity. You are the heart of the Teragen, but you are also the linchpin that keeps us going. In your absence, we lose our focus. I fear that our direction and solidarity begin and end with you.

• Apostle: That is because Mal is Teras. He embodies our potential. Look at him; we each see him differently because he is what we have to become. You sound as though you want the Teragen to part from Mal, as though such a thing were possible. We are nothing without Mal. You know it; everyone does. Mal, are you going to sit and let a monkey like Orzaiz talk like that?

• Mal: Of course I am, Marcel, because he is right. You are my children, but in time you must grow beyond me. But the time for growth is over for the nonce. You have bloomed magnificently, but like anything, we must now trim and channel that growth. Our adversaries are moving against us, and we are at a crossroads. The gyre is widening, the world spins on; soon we will outgrow our role as slaves and problem-solvers, and baselines will feel that they have no choice but to strike at us. The essence of our future is struggle. We must be ready.

I see you all, ready to proclaim yourselves as Terats, but what of our enemies? The count is right, we have evolved in the last two years, but it is time to show the world our new face. We cannot hide anymore. *The Null Manifesto* was only the beginning, a warning that has been ignored or grievously misunderstood. We Terats must demonstrate to all, nova and baseline alike, the path that our race must take — and we start with Utopia.

Primacy, Nova Vigilance, you both have my blessing to carry on. Be my terrible angels and deliver my wrath to those showing insufficient respect to the One Race.

Doctor Zia, my dear friend, you and your Harvesters must hide for now, like the titans in Tartarus, awaiting the great battle. I caution you thusly: It is far better to be a monster than a slave, but it is far better to be a god than a monster. Monsters can only destroy, while gods can destroy and create. Do not so worship the monster in yourselves that you misplace the seeds of your godhood. It would be a shame to miss your apotheosis for a mere revolution. For now, however, be monsters. Night and shadow are your providence; teach the baseline masses that there are things in the darkness that eclipse their nightmares in terror.

Jeremiah, Pedro, it is to you that others come for guidance; give it freely, but know that I am back. My Apostle, you know the path and its treacherous ways supremely well; take action and show the world that gods walk upon it and a reckoning will soon be at hand.

Raoul, continue to be the sharp point of the wedge. Get them accustomed to honoring us. Walk among them, charm them with wit and humor, and allay the most ludicrous of their fears.

Narcosis, sweet, sensuous Narcosis, telegenic angel, misunderstood and ridiculed. Take my message to the masses, have them worship you and, through you, me. Make them love the One Race more than they love their own, and the battle will be won before the conflict even commences.

Today we are all brothers and sisters, novas and fellow Terats. Tomorrow a new day dawns; those who do not have the conviction will fall as victims. There will come a time

when sacrifices are needed. Only the selfish will hide. Some among you have forgotten what Teras truly means and where it leads. You now have a chance to find your way back onto the path. If you do not, you will lose more than your way.

No one masters the One Race. Those who betray the movement or falter in their faith have no place among us. Look around, to the Terat before you, to the Terat beside you and to the Terat within you, and know that in the years to come, friends will become foes, foes allies and the Teragen stronger for it.

This is the essence of Teras: The strong must prevail, the wise must preside, and the enlightened must guide us onward.

CNN Breaking News, June 12th, 2008

T2M Europe member Saxon, missing and presumed dead for over a week, suddenly reappeared this morning on the set of the N! Network's *Nova Morning Live* daily news and variety program. Saxon made his presence known a half-hour into the broadcast when he began yelling from the fifth row of the audience. According to witnesses, the obviously disturbed nova repeatedly exclaimed: "I am Saxon and Mal is my savior!" Saxon had been thought killed while investigating members of the Teragen, a nova terrorist movement led by the enigmatic nova named Divis Mal. Saxon was eventually subdued by representatives of Project Utopia and is now in their care. Bootleg copies of his proclamation are reportedly streaming across the OpNet.

In related news, CNN has just learned that police in Thailand have uncovered evidence linking Saxon to the disappearance of a over a dozen prostitutes in Bangkok over the least 18 months, as well as allegations of a huge cover-up by Project Utopia. Utopia spokeswoman Hannah Fakir has scheduled a press conference....



CHAPTER ONE: INSIDE THE TERAGEN

In the world of *Aberrant*, the Teragen is an enigma, a veiled threat ready to burst forth from the shadows of Utopia's fading brightness. The ultimate variable, the Teragen is uncontrollable and unpredictable, and this is what makes it so formidable — and it is why most people, baseline and nova alike, are wary or frightened of the movement. Are they villains and bad guys? Yes and no. Terats see themselves as the protectors and defenders of novas — the One Race — and they have the conviction and the ability to carry out their threats. They accept that the M-R Node makes them more than human, and while not all have Taint or give in to anti-social, inhuman or psychopathic behavior, all understand the need to define their existence on their own terms. The Nova Age means different things to different people. To the Teragen, it means the freedom to explore and discover what it is to be nova.

This chapter opens the inner workings of the Teragen to you. The first part of this book presented the Teragen in the words of its own members. This chapter and the ones that follow serve to help you integrate the Teragen into your *Aberrant* series. The information from here on in is designed to make you comfortable storytelling or playing the Teragen and give you the tools needed to change, modify and bring to life this diverse group. So, go ahead, take the first step, the Marvels, the Monsters and the Portents await.

An Insider's Perspective

To understand the Teragen, one must realize that it is not a cohesive organization but a collective of like-minded individuals united by their belief in the One Race and their distinct status as novas. Nothing binds them together but their idealism. The Teragen is part secret society, part revolutionary movement and part brotherhood, and this only begins to scratch the surface. Not all members see eye-to-eye (*au contraire...*), but the movement draws much of its strength from this diversity — attracting visionaries, radicals and psychopaths. Not even the saccharin "One World" ideology of Utopia can hope to bring together such contrasting individuals and unite them in purpose and ideology.

United purpose does not mean freedom from internal conflict, however. On the contrary, while Terats agree on the fundamentals of their movement — the concept of Teras, the superiority of the One Race and the leadership of Divis Mal — the particulars are open for debate, and furious debate at that. Like the gods of antiquity, the Teragen love to squabble among themselves, thriving on the cathartic release such conflict provides.

The Teragen's antagonism toward Utopia is not a matter of coffeehouse ideology, but a matter of survival. It is clear to Terats that Utopia and its lackeys, the Triton Foundation, T2M and the secretive Aeon Society, have one goal in mind: the total subjugation of novas. Because of this, Teragen members know they must act. Their time has come and if nothing is done, petty baseline fear and jealousy will destroy the glory of the One Race. This, in a nutshell, is the Teragen.

Historical Overview

In 2008, the Teragen is a fact of life. Every day, the media issues warnings and investigative reports on the bad boys of the Nova Age — they have become part of the nova landscape. Utopia scurries to limit the movement's power and influence, while teenagers and fanboys everywhere wear the latest Teragen fashions and gather on OpNet newsgroups proclaiming their allegiance to Divis Mal. Although the Slider scandal has stolen much of the spotlight, at least temporarily, the Teragen is, nonetheless, a force to be reckoned with. What many forget is that the movement, in its current form, isn't even three years old.

Publicly, the movement has only been around since October 2005, when Divis Mal issued *The Null Manifesto*, and the Teragen came out in support of it. In truth, the Teragen has existed, in various forms and incarnations, since the explosion of the *Galatea* and the earliest days of the Nova Age. Some conspiracy theorists even suggest that the core of the Teragen — Divis Mal, Jeremiah Scripture and Pedro Santiago — have been around for much, much longer. Regardless, the newer members wonder if the Teragen just "happened" or if Divis Mal pulled the strings all along.

The Roots

In its earliest incarnation, the movement (nameless at the time) was nothing more than a series of meetings and conversations between Pedro "The Mathematician"

Santiago and the dashing Count Raoul Orzaiz about the state of the world and novas in general.

The Mathematician and Orzaiz quickly realized the threat Utopia posed to novas. Fears turned into reality following the global upheaval of 1999. They watched novas become the saviors and then the indentured servants and slaves of a baseline world. Novas were the solution to all the world's problems, and their duty was to sacrifice themselves in the process. Santiago and Orzaiz wanted no part of this.

Meeting in the summer of 1999, the two novas debated and decided to recruit others to their cause. A pair of handpicked novas soon joined the discussions, namely Marcel Delorimier and Caroline Fong. During this time, the movement was a roundtable of like-minded individuals, each trying to come to terms with what they had become. They understood that, Zurich Accord or not, novas were definitely something more than human. They gathered in Chile, Spain, Hong Kong and France, slowly defining the core beliefs that the Teragen now hold dear, but the movement still had much to learn.

Between 2000 and 2002, the roundtable grew, attracting novas tired of Utopia's lies, many of them elites. The nova bloodshed in Africa soured many on the status quo, and the Teragen offered what baselines could not — understanding and sympathy. Baselines could not comprehend the pain and mental trauma of eruption, and Utopia's promises often proved empty. Some of the disgruntled, bitter, broken and angry found a home with the Teragen.

The Coming of Mal and the Birth of the Teragen

Although Divis Mal and Scripture were not yet part of the movement, both novas had contact with The Mathematician and Orzaiz early on, subtly influencing the direction and evolution of the roundtable. From the very beginning, Mal and his life partner saw potential in the group of dissident novas and groomed them into the Teragen. Before 2003, Scripture had more contact with the emerging Teragen than Divis Mal. Jeremiah taught them the process of Chrysalis and how to use it to evolve. It was Scripture who first helped Caroline Fong establish the concept of Teras and even suggested the name to her to encapsulate what the movement stood for. By 2002, Scripture was an unofficial member of the roundtable, giving Mal greater access to the group to test its worth.

Divis Mal's time came in 2003. The fledgling roundtable seemed ready to accept him and, more importantly, leave its baseline roots behind. Mal did not "join"; in truth, the other members acquiesced to him and his power. In one fell swoop, he gave the movement what it was missing — singularity of vision and purpose. It was Mal, during his first meeting with the group in the highlands of Chile, who christened them the "Teragen." To those gathered, Mal represented (and still represents) what it truly means to be *Homo sapiens novus* and not a baseline pretending to be nova.

The next year was a time of introspection and change for the Teragen. Most gathered around and worshipped Mal, eager to follow in the titan's footsteps. Even his present-day rivals, The Mathematician and Orzaiz, understood the role he played. They could not discount his presence and the effect he had on the others — much less the direction he gave the movement. There were barely a dozen Terats at this time, and most underwent their first Chrysalis, forever changing the movement as many renounced, or began to shed, their baseline identities. It was at this time that the first nova supremacists surfaced, Shrapnel leading the way; it was no longer a question of novas being distinct, but of "us versus them."

By late 2004, the Teragen came out of its cocoon, though the movement remained an ideological one, rather than an active revolutionary cell. This all changed when Utopia opened its facility in Bahrain and, soon thereafter, captured Caroline Fong. It was time to act.

The Null Manifesto and the Years Following

Unfortunately, the Teragen was divided. While most acknowledged that Utopia was growing and expanding and that it was only a matter of time before the organization focused its attention on the movement, certain key figures — Pedro "The Mathematician" Santiago, Altaz "The Apothecary" Zia and Orzaiz — were apprehensive about taking direct and violent action. For months, the Teragen grew divided, cells and factions operated independently and even warred with each other. Characteristically, Mal refused to make a ruling on the issue. For the better part of 2005, he refused to take sides but encouraged all to do what they thought was right — he was testing the movement, seeing if his Terats had the conviction to act alone. They did. On October 31st of that year, the world stood still as *The Null Manifesto* went public.

The baseline media and governments went ballistic. The Terat proclamation of independence from laws and governments caused a new wave of anti-nova sentiment in certain parts of the world, further fueling the emergent Teragen crusade. Utopia scurried to counter the Teragen, but the Project underestimated the resolve of Mal's followers and their popularity among the outcasts and disenfranchised. Like it or not, the Teragen was here to stay.

The Teragen spread its wings and flexed its muscles in 2006. *The Null Manifesto* left a sour taste in a number of Terats' mouths; they worried that it only made the movement vulnerable to Utopia's sanctions. Another camp insisted that the time was right, that there was no point in hiding while Utopia grew more powerful, brainwashing novas or exterminating them in some PC version of the Final Solution. In the end, the Teragen agreed to disagree, and the movement calmed down somewhat. Santiago and Orzaiz continued insinuating the Teragen's influence into the global infrastructure, while Shrapnel formed the radical Primacy and took the fight to the streets.

Mal's Reflection

In three short years, Mal had drastically transformed the Teragen, giving them purpose and proclaiming to the world that the One Race was here to stay. Mal had guided the movement to this stage but realized that the Teragen would start to stagnate if he did not do something. By November of 2006, Divis Mal had made preparations to undergo a Chrysalis, widely assumed to be his fourth. Before slumbering, he tasked the Teragen to open themselves to Teras and to prepare for his return and the dawning of a new age for the Teragen. This was the last the movement, except for Scripture, heard of their leader for close to two years.

2007 saw the Terats scattered; most took Mal's proclamation to heart and strove to embrace Teras in mind, body and soul. Tensions with T2M and Utopia escalated, and the UN issued sanctions against the Teragen and its allies. Ironically, the more Utopia and the governments squeezed the Teragen, the further its resolve and popularity among baselines grew. To the baseline youth, the Teragen represented change, a dynamic force capable of opposing "goody-two-shoes" Project Utopia. The Teragen's numbers swelled during this period, attracting both hard-core members and "poseurs" enamoured with the power, freedom and irreverent attitude of the movement and factions like Pandamonion and the newly formed Nova Vigilance.

The Present

The Slider scandal has proven to be a godsend for the Teragen. While their public image suffered after being framed for Jennifer Lander's murder, it showed the movement that Utopia did have a weak spot, that the enemy was not invulnerable. Unfortunately, reaction among the Teragen has not been unified; certain groups like NV and the Primacy initially misread the situation and used André Corbin's plight to strike at him and his Aberrants. Cooler heads have now prevailed, but animosity separates both anti-Utopia groups, although efforts are now underway to sway the Aberrants to the movement's side.

June 2008 sees the Teragen at a crossroads. In the two years since Mal departed, the movement has grown, factions and ideologies have hardened and it has slowly become obvious that adherence to Teras may no longer be enough to unite the Teragen as one. A line is being drawn between the radical elements and those who urge caution. For the first time, the Teragen is looking inward and not to the changing world around it, and this might be a potential weakness for the movement. Utopia is fluttering, public reaction to novas is shifting once more, and groups like Corbin's Aberrants, the Directive and DeVries are coming into their own. If the Teragen plays its cards right, it stands to gain much in these hectic times.

Most importantly, Divis Mal is back, returning in time to attend the June meeting of the most prominent Terats, the so-called "Pantheon." Still under the effects of Chrysalis and trying to understand how it changed him, Mal is impatient with the Teragen and their childish antics. Faction-

alism and lack of conviction were tolerable three years ago, but as the first decade of the Nova Age draws to a close, Mal is itching for change and progress. An angry godhead is one thing; an impatient one is much, much worse.

Membership Timeline

The Teragen has grown in spurts, attracting members after key events like the broadcast of *The Null Manifesto*. The following timeline shows when the prominent members of the Teragen Pantheon became involved. Remember that the movement has many other members, both poseurs and committed revolutionaries.

Date	Member/Event
1999	Raoul Orzaiz and Pedro Santiago have the first of several meetings that found the movement.
2000	The roundtable continues as Marcel Delorimier and Caroline Fong join the movement.
2001	The Apothecary joins and founds the Harvesters.
2002	Geryon, Shrapnel and Swarm Queen join. Scripture joins the roundtable.
2003	Divis Mal arrives and names the movement the Teragen.
2004	Project Utopia captures Caroline Fong. Delorimier and Scripture found the Cult of Mal.
2005	Narcosis joins and founds the Pandamonion. Divis Mal issues <i>The Null Manifesto</i> . Shrapnel founds the Primacy. Bounty, Leviathan, Sin-Eater and Synapse join. The Casabancas begin to meet and cooperate.
2006	Epoch, Tarik and the Companions join. Divis Mal enters his fourth Chrysalis.
2007	Project Utopia captures Sluice. Geryon founds Nova Vigilance. Turncoat infiltrates the Teragen but falls under the sway of the Cult of Mal. The Confederate joins.
2008	Clarion joins. Sluice escapes from Bahrain. Divis Mal emerges from his fourth Chrysalis.

Organization

The Teragen has no central organization, chain-of-command or secretive hierarchy to keep younger members in line and protect older ones. In truth, the Teragen is fluid and amorphous, much to the chagrin of Utopia and the Directive, which cannot imprison or kill a meme. At its core, the Teragen is a brotherhood where each member supports and backs the others, creating a network of allies and resources that spans the globe. While individual members may disagree on specifics, they agree on being Terats, and that enables them to cast aside biases and personal prejudices and work as a unified force

— at least most of the time. Members are Terats first and foremost, and this bond makes the movement powerful and dangerous to outsiders. All Terats can count on Orzaiz's contacts, The Confederate's muscle or Synapse's information-gathering talents — all they have to do is get their Terat brothers to help. This creates a system where enterprising and well-connected Terats can call on the resources of the whole movement.

By the same token, members of the Teragen have to put up with the unique and temperamental personalities of their fellow Terats. Teragen leadership is fickle, determined not by talent, potential or ability, but by charisma, reputation and progress down the path of Teras. The Teragen resembles a high-school clique or, even more appropriately, a pantheon of bickering gods.

Organizationally, the Teragen operates according to circles of influence and networks of favors. Though there are factions within the Teragen, most are cliques (or even cults of personality) centered on one or more Terats rather than definable orders. For this reason, many Terats cross faction lines frequently. The difference between the Primacy and NV for example is mostly semantic, and belonging to one does not preclude membership in the other.

The Teragen Pantheon

The "Pantheon" is the closest the movement has to a governing body. The Pantheon is an outgrowth of the roundtable that gave birth to the Teragen, though its membership has grown through the years. Technically, all members of the movement belong to the Pantheon, a forum where they can discuss, plan and just be in the company of their fellow Terats. The truth is that it takes a certain reputation to gain a voice at the roundtable and that not all Terats want to waste their time arguing policy or discussing the higher questions of Teras. So a core group sits on the Pantheon, subtly directing the myriad heads of the beast that is the Teragen. It was Marcel "The Apostle" Delorimier who first called the roundtable a pantheon.

Membership is flexible and amorphous. At times the Pantheon includes only the oldest members of the movement — Orzaiz, Santiago, Mal, Scripture — while at others it runs a gamut of Terats. Given the Terats' revolutionary and capricious nature, Pantheon standing is an uncertain thing, and members may find themselves in the limelight one day and ostracized the next. For now, the belief in Teras, the notion of the One Race, Mal's presence and *The Null Manifesto* have allowed the Pantheon (and the rest of the Teragen for that matter) to remain focused, even though its members change and influence ebbs and flows. More than anything else, the Pantheon makes the Teragen resemble a large extended family.

Divis Mal sits at the center of the Pantheon. His whims and vision steer and influence the Pantheon and, through it, the Teragen. His blessing or sanction is probably the sole concrete determinant of who's who among the Pantheon. Mal's traditional laissez-faire attitude toward leadership only further muddles the paths of influence.

As the Teragen grows and evolves, so does the Pantheon. In Mal's absence, the Pantheon had the chance to develop and find its role within the movement, freed from his stifling presence. The result is the emergence of four, not necessarily opposing but clearly distinct, views within the Pantheon — all part and parcel of the Teragen's maturation process. The four camps are divided along political and spiritual lines, with the radicals and thinkers on one side and the believers and patriots on the other.

Radicals and Thinkers

Embracing the cause of the One Race, the radicals call for a renewed assault on Utopia and other baseline enemies. The radicals have surged in number, attracting young novas hungry for a fight and a chance to revel in the freedom and infamy of the Teragen. Not all radicals are gun-toting maniacs, but Terats like Geryon, Swarm Queen, Epoch and even Mal himself see the benefit of using them in their movement. More pragmatic radicals like Shrapnel realize the Teragen cannot hide indefinitely, but in typical Terat fashion, what course to take is open to much debate. Recently, the Harvesters have come out in support of the radicals, signaling a shift within the Teragen as a whole to a more active role — potentially alienating the thinkers.

While the radicals are the sword and fist of the Teragen, the thinkers are its real movers and shakers. Misunderstood by many, the thinkers do not actually oppose the idea of taking a more active role. They caution that it may not be the right moment for an all out confrontation, however, and that there is much to do — laying down a solid foundation, for example — before the movement can evolve.

Believers and Patriots

Mal's pervasive influence has made a number of Terats question, behind closed doors at least, the role he plays in the Pantheon. While all acknowledge and respect Divis Mal and what he stands for (not to mention his unsurpassed power), some have recently voiced concerns about his potentially destructive domination of the Teragen. These patriots argue that the Pantheon should function to balance Mal's presence, to give the movement a solid and grounded foundation to better control and direct the Teragen. This view, of course, is paramount to heresy among the more fanatical followers of Divis Mal. These believers argue that only Mal knows the path the Teragen must follow and the steps needed to reach their manifest destiny.

Who's Who

Pantheon membership is seldom constant; some members have been there since the very beginning, while others have alternating periods of activity and detachment. Below is a quick rundown of who is presently "in" among the Teragen and the Pantheon, but it is by no means an exhaustive list. If you're running a Teragen series, go ahead and have the players' characters mingle with or even sit on the Pantheon. The Teragen is a young and growing movement, and there's always room for enterprising Terats who want to make their mark.

Driven Mal

The godhead and father figure of the Teragen, Mal's authority is unquestionable, despite his claims to be only a guiding light or inspiration to his fellow Terats. Even in his absence, Mal was an ever-present force in the Teragen. Now returned, Mal is anxious to get the movement going, but he is curious to see what direction "his children" want take if left to their own devices. He is preparing to test the Teragen, to challenge each and every member's resolve and commitment to the movement. He knows even now that some will not make it through, but such is a small price to pay when perfection and destiny await.

Relations: There is no disputing Mal's role in the Teragen, and even the patriots respect the father of Teras. At the same time, Mal's power is addictive, and there are those jealous of it. Mal can count on Scripture and The Apostle, and while The Mathematician seems to be moving away from him, the two still spend evenings discussing the future of the movement.

Pedro "The Mathematician" Santiago

The pragmatic counterweight of the Teragen, The Mathematician is slowly receding into the background. At one time a central figure, only the Pantheon and a handful of other Terats have had any dealings with him of late. His agenda is simple, he sees the path the Teragen are taking and the bloody war that is its destination, and he is trying to prepare the movement for this. Unfortunately, this same ability to see the trends to come is paralyzing him with the fear of losing control.

Relations: The Mathematician is wary of The Apostle and the so-called believers. In an attempt to limit their power, he has started to back the Harvesters and the Primacy, partially precipitating the conflict he is so desperately trying to prevent.

Allison "Shrapnel" Hughes

Shrapnel has been a prominent member since she first joined the movement. A visionary and an idealist, Shrapnel is nonetheless a product of her brutal past as an elite. Vocal and driven, she formed the Primacy and has been championing nova rights and supremacy since its inception. Recently, with the arrival of The Confederate, Shrapnel has taken a more active and radical role, taking her movement into the streets.

Relations: Shrapnel has little patience for Terats who cling to their baseline pasts (like Orzaiz). Although this animosity stems from her own fragmented psyche, her views have driven a wedge between the Primacy and Casablanco. Strangely, The Mathematician has taken her under his wing, but she doesn't respect the "old man." The Confederate, who is jealous of Santiago, encourages this sentiment.

Marcel "The Apostle" Delorimier

Fanatical in his belief of Mal's divinity, The Apostle is tired of the Teragen refusing to acknowledge Mal as their true leader and godhead. Using his ties to Mal and Scripture, Delorimier wields tremendous influence and is willing to direct it with impunity at those he perceives

as enemies of Mal or the Teragen. His loyalty and worship of Mal shield The Apostle from anyone trying to oppose him. Indeed, he quickly brands those who do as traitors and heretics.

Relations: Orzaiz, The Mathematician and even elements of Nova Vigilance and the Primacy dislike Delorimier; he is a divisive force in the Teragen. Surprisingly, he and Narcosis have been working closely in recent months, worrying the more conservative elements about the repercussions of an alliance between the two.

Jeremiah Scripture

Mal's lover and lifetime companion is trying to heal the current wounds within the Teragen, to bridge the gap between the various ideologies — a move that makes him unpopular with almost everyone. Few realize the power and influence the "patriarch of the Teragen" wields, and his loss would deal the movement a devastating blow. Unknown to all, his influence greatly tempers Mal's ambition and impatience.

Relations: As The Apostle's mentor, many assume Scripture approves and condones Delorimier's current actions, but he does not. This perception has turned potential allies away, and isolated him from the rest of the Teragen. A word to Mal is all it would take to remedy this situation, but Scripture prefers to bide his time, finding that his sway within the Teragen becomes only greater the more he is underestimated. It is not for nothing that he is Mal's partner.

Count Orzaiz

Although many would be loath to admit it, the Count has done much for the Teragen through his media tours and secret recruitment drives. Orzaiz brought two-thirds of the Pantheon into the movement, making him a patriot to Mal. Currently, he knows the Teragen are about to face their greatest ordeal and is preparing to help the movement ease its way through. He has contacts and resources in place to help deflect attention away from the Teragen and buy the movement time should it need it.

Relations: Liked by all despite moments of interpersonal friction, Orzaiz is the uncle everyone wished they had. He can make trouble disappear or march out the cavalry with a simple telephone call. His charm and persuasive talents are insidious. By the same token, his baseline romances and connections earn him the ire of Shrapnel and other supremacists. His recent, relatively stable relationship with the Aberrant Charlotte Holden has helped forge inroads into that faction and allayed Shrapnel's fears.

Factions and Movements

The Teragen, composed of driven and charismatic individuals, was bound, sooner or later, to fracture into a number of ideologies and factions. More like fraternities than structured teams, the Terat factions form the social core of the Teragen. Composed of Terats sharing the same beliefs and opinions, these cliques help give a concrete dimension to a movement founded on ideology. Terats

move freely between these groups, although they must be careful not to bruise too many egos. Nevertheless, this diversity and freedom of association means the Teragen can react and deal with most threats quickly. There is little time wasted in marshaling forces. With the June 3rd meeting and the increasing maturity of the Teragen as a single entity, the factions have begun to solidify, but the movement is far from being dictatorial or stagnant.

Factions give you easily identifiable groups your players can encounter, either as allies and recruiters or as foes and antagonists. The key thing to keep in mind is the spirit of the Teragen. If Terats wanted to follow orders and have superiors, they would have joined Utopia or become elites. Belonging to a faction is as much a matter of ideals and beliefs as it is a matter of necessity.

Nova Vigilance

Nicknames: Dark Angels, Liberators, Hammers

Next to Mal and Count Orzaiz, NV is the most identifiable and visible facet of the Teragen. Nova Vigilance is essentially a nova watchdog group, looking out for novas around the world and seeking retribution in their name. Seen as the counterpart to T2M, the two groups have clashed on a number of occasions. This delights N! and its viewers but worries Utopia and the world governments. Unlike the Primacy (see below), NV is not motivated by any agenda beyond the protection and freedom of all novas. This does not mean

keeping the kid gloves on, however. On the contrary, the Terats of NV are firm believers in the *lex talionis*: an eye for an eye — if you publicly slam novas, expect a demonstration, if you kill or injure a nova, expect the worst, as the Mayor of Tampa discovered.

Membership: Nova Vigilance is currently one of the most prominent factions in the Teragen. Geryon, Epoch and a few others are its core, but many other Terats (Synapse, Leviathan, Matador and The Confederate among them) often join NV in the field. With so many allies comes significant influence.

Motivations: Simply put, NV has had enough of baselines expecting novas to be the world's scapegoats. NV firmly believes that if they do not stand up for novas, baselines will only step up their pogrom against the One Race. Chief among their concerns is Project Utopia and the rumors of a nova death camp in Bahrain.

Allies and Foes: The Primacy and NV have grown close in the last few months, and the lines are starting to blur between the two factions. Yet, some Terats of NV take exception to Shrapnel and The Confederate's stern anti-baseline agenda. For obvious reasons, Utopia and T2M oppose NV, but the baseline masses still gobble up NV merchandise.

The Primacy

Nicknames: Monkey Skinners, Exterminators, Scythes



On the surface, it often seems that the Primacy and NV are one and the same, but whereas NV is a reactionary group, the Primacy is active in promoting their agenda of a nova nation and the supremacy of the One Race. While NV acts in the open, the Primacy prefers influencing (read: threatening) leaders and conducting acts of terrorism and sabotage. Among the most radical Terats, the Primacy, headed by Shrapnel and The Confederate, are ardent believers in nova supremacy. To them, baselines are untalented, pointless wastes of skin (read: second-class citizens); it's the talking monkeys who should serve novas, not the other way around. Shrapnel has personally witnessed the callous disregard most baseline organizations (Utopia especially) have toward the One Race, and she knows they must be stopped.

Membership: Shrapnel and The Confederate are the heart and soul of the faction. Their respective contacts with the old guard and the newer members makes the faction very influential. The Primacy attracts those Terats tired of the abuse their kind suffers at the hands of baselines and are in need of some revenge. Similar to NV, the Primacy is more radical, straddling the line between terrorists and insurgents. Younger Terats, those driven by power, have flocked to the movement, their heads filled with visions of a new Eden ruled by novas.

Motivations: In the past, the Primacy was mainly a political movement, but since The Confederate's arrival, they have stepped up their anti-baseline campaign. To the Primacy, the time for debate is over. The One Race cannot and will not exist in servitude, and there will come a time when novas will have had enough and rise up against their oppressors. The zeal of their supremacist doctrine grows with each passing day.

Allies and Foes: The Primacy is responsible for NV's growing radicalism, turning the watchdog group into its own militant arm. Shrapnel and her followers are the de facto leaders of the radicals, attracting Zia and his Harvesters to her banner and alienating the likes of The Mathematician and Orzaiz.

The Casablanicas

Nicknames: Sneaks, Suits, Bogarts, the Network

A diverse and loosely associated faction, the Casablanicas are the Teragen's eyes and ears. While the other factions go about their business, the Casablanicas hover on the periphery, using their contacts and skills to make sure no nasty surprises are in store for the movement. More importantly, and an oft ignored fact, it is the Casablanicas who keep Terats united and in contact with each other. It is not unheard of for a Suit to drop in unannounced and check up on a fellow Terat. Most hosts do not object because the exchange of information is two-way. Recently, the Casablanicas have taken on the role of coordinators, helping to transform the Teragen into a more organized and effective movement. Organizing the takedown of Saxon is a prime example of this new role.

Membership: Even more so than NV, the Casablanicas are an open group — all it takes to belong is an interest in

keeping the Teragen informed and aware of external and internal threats. Count Orzaiz is the group's lynchpin, but Terats such as Sin-Eater, Synapse and, on occasion, Epoch contribute to the diversity of the Suits. Since participation in the Network is one of the few ways of serving the Teragen anonymously, its members outnumber the rest of the Teragen factions by two to one. They keep a very low profile, commonly staying just out of sight of those who wouldn't approve of their Teragen affiliation. Despite NV's blatant anti-Utopia sentiment, it's the Casablanicas who truly worry the Project.

Motivations: Discounting conspiracy theories, the Casablanicas are the nervous system of the Teragen and are primarily concerned with the movement's survival and continued growth. Of course, individual Suits have their own reasons for participating, but most are patriots of the movement.

Allies and Foes: With Orzaiz at the helm, many radicals see the Casablanicas as nothing more than an attempt by the count to retain his baseline ties while still being a Terat. Although Shrapnel understands the need for the Sneaks, her younger followers are pressuring her to cut all ties with them.

The Pandaimonion

Nicknames: Faces, Divas, Pretty Boys

The Pandaimonion is one of the largest Teragen factions, though the majority of its members are nothing more than poseurs and wannabes used by Narcosis to expand her influence across the globe. The sheer numbers involved with the Pandaimonion give Narcosis substantial pull and weight among the Teragen. If there is ever a need for "loyal revolutionaries" to lead a charge, all Narcosis has to do is make a phone call — allowing the Teragen to spare its more valuable members from needless slaughter. To some, this may seem hypocritical, but the Teragen are fighting a war, and a few sacrifices are unavoidable.

Membership: The self-proclaimed gods and divas of the Pandaimonion are the Teragen's pretty boys. A good number have ties to the entertainment industry, mainly N! and the XWF, while others are dilettantes and playboys no longer content to play the baseline field. Because of this, the Pandaimonion has access to a number of contacts and resources, adding to the Teragen's arsenal. A few members, including Boom-Boom Harmon, are beginning to tire of Narcosis and want the spotlight for themselves.

Motivation: The Pandaimonion exists only to further Narcosis' agenda of increasing her own fame and brainwashing baselines into becoming her followers. While an ardent supporter of the Teragen, she also has her own self-promotion in mind, potentially making her a danger to her fellow Terats.

Allies and Foes: Beautiful, petty and demented, Narcosis plays the Teragen like an instrument, though Scripture scrutinizes her relentlessly to prevent her from doing any damage. She has wrangled the Pandaimonion into a position of importance, if only for their sheer number of contacts, which makes it hard for most to ignore

the "Terat Siren." Unfortunately, the radicals dismiss Narcosis as a fake, and the more conservative Terats disapprove of her public persona.

The Harvesters

Nicknames: Hydras, The Freak Show

The Harvesters are not only radical, but above all, freakish. Since he joined the Teragen, the brilliant Altaz "The Apothecary" Zia has made the Harvesters a home for those Teragen members so Taint-ridden that they have nowhere else to hide. Holed up in secluded locations across the globe, the Harvesters tire of hiding and are itching to show the world the beauty and horror of Taint. Most prowl at night, avenging themselves on the baselines who abandoned them. Unfaithful or unsupportive family and friends are usually the first victims, before the Harvesters move on to more visible targets like Utopia and TZM. The Harvesters take their name from their dream of harvesting Taint for power, though some would prefer to reap the human race.

Membership: The Harvesters are an exclusive group, tied not by ideals or philosophy but their hideous inhumanity. Not all Harvesters are monstrous in appearance, in a select few Taint has unhinged their psyches turning them into serial killers and psychopaths that make the Manson family and Ted Bundy look like preschoolers. Zia brings most Hydras into the movement and looks after them like his children.

Motivations: The Harvesters have one goal in mind, the eradication of the baseline virus. Darwinist in the extreme, they argue novas are the new dominant species on the planet, and if something is not done to limit baselines, their sheer number might even drown out the One Race. Zia argues for a period of study before any extermination begins and shuns displays of outright violence, while others want to get into the action right away.

Allies and Foes: Respected and feared among the Teragen, the Harvesters' greatest threat is an internal one. Many Hydras see The Apothecary as a weakling baseline because his Taint manifests psychologically and not physically. Leviathan is starting to grumble that the Harvesters should be led by those who embrace Taint, not those who hide behind theories.

The Companions

Nicknames: Sheiks, Genies, Club Sand

The Companions are the creation of Jordanian nova Tarik ibn'Mahmoud. The religious and political strife of the Middle East has kept many local novas isolated from one another and the world at large. Tarik has used his network of contacts, which grew out of the informal support structure of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to give these novas a sense of purpose. He ensures that novas gather in small cells that then become dependent on him for contact with others and the outside world. He spouts an opportunistic melding of Islamic belief and *The Null Manifesto* to justify his role. Some Companions have their doubts about Tarik, but they have very few other options.

Membership: Tarik is the only Companion to have gained access to the Pantheon, but there are others. The

Casabancas have made contact with several Sheiks, and they tell stories that differ from Tarik's tales.

Motivations: Tarik quite simply wishes to accumulate power and influence. He foresees leaving a glorious legacy to his successors, but for now, he must expand his power and influence. Philosophy, religion and politeness are just tools in this process. Most other Companions are honestly striving to understand their place in a world that has largely rejected them.

Allies and Foes: Tarik has managed to make himself many friends within the Teragen, including the hard-nosed Geryon (whom he hid from Utopia). The Apostle dislikes Tarik's Islamic outlook but hopes to convert his flock to the worship of Mal. Other Companions are building ties with the Casabancas but are most concerned with baseline problems. Many Israelis still see the Companions as tied to the PLO, while many Arab countries believe them to be subversives in league with their enemies.

Teragen Around the World

The Teragen is a worldwide movement. Its members hail from the four corners of the globe and make their presence felt in both subtle and obvious ways. Unfortunately, it is also a comparatively small movement, home to about 60 hard-core members and a few hundred poseurs and lackeys — a modest percentage of the world's nova population. For this reason, the Teragen must be careful and keep its membership safe from attack. The movement does not go in for OpNet stereotypes like "secret bases," but Terats do have a number of safe houses and enclaves scattered around the world where they can meet and live away from prying eyes.

The network of enclaves is quite informal. Traditionally, an enclave is open to all Terats, but its keepers reserve the right to be selective to ensure security. It is in the interest of all to keep the system open, so that travelling Terats — regardless of whom they hang with — can find safety. Raoul Orzaiz, Geryon and Scripture all spend significant time ensuring that the major enclaves remain open to all. The enclaves below are well known among the hard core of the movement.

The Americas

The Americas form the biggest bastion of Teragen support. Vocal Teragen support has become a way for disenfranchised baselines and novas alike to stick it to "the Man" (in this case Utopia). In the US and Canada this is largely an empty, adolescent counter-culture, mostly consisting of buying "Mal Made Me Do It" T-shirts, collecting Nova Vigilance action figures and acting out. In Latin America, however, anti-Utopian feeling has mixed with long-standing nationalist resentment of foreign solutions, and Teragen support is more solid and more violent. The Primacy has been most effective in building ties with various revolutionaries in South America. Only the US

government's distrust of novas spoils the picture, forcing hard-core Terats to keep a low profile even among a throng of "Mal'icious" teenagers. The movement does maintain a major enclave in New York City, however (The Blackburn Hotel, see pages 99-101).

Heartland (Nebraska, USA)

On the surface, Heartland is a typical farming community in upstate Nebraska, near the borders of South Dakota and Wyoming. Fields of golden corn stretch out for miles around, isolating Heartland from the rest of civilization. Even the small two-lane highway that runs through the town is seldom used, most traffic staying to 176 further south. What few realize is that sleepy Heartland is a Teragen enclave and the home of the Harvesters. Behind closed doors and below ground in a massive complex, The Apothecary and the Harvesters carry out their own monstrous breeding experiments.

The baselines living in Heartland are essentially thralls, extremely xenophobic and devoted to the Harvesters tending to their tainted relatives. The Apostle has helped The Apothecary install a brand of Christianity in the town that justifies both the Harvesters and their experiments. Marshal Jeb Wycoff also ensures that any unwelcome visitors soon leave, lest they discover too much.

Europe

Several prominent Terats are European in origin, and the movement has relatively deep roots on the con-

inent, with many enclaves. Generalized support for the movement is not as fervent or as fashionable as in North America, however. European baselines have simply not jumped on the bandwagon, although Raoul Orzaiz has been supremely effective in recruiting novas. The Directive has a great deal of influence in Europe, and this makes Teragen operations more difficult.

Club Zmei (St. Petersburg, Russia)

One of the stomping grounds of the Primacy, Club Zmei is a hangout for young novas, attracting those who dislike the Amp Room's Euro-trash atmosphere and clientele. Known only by word of mouth, Club Zmei is located in an old section of St. Petersburg, where Terats and other radical novas can gather and discuss their inherent superiority. It serves as one of the primary sites of Teragen recruitment.

Natalya "Swarm Queen" Dornova oversees the club and its associated safe houses. A close friend (and some whisper lover) of Shrapnel, Swarm Queen has taken great pains to protect her enclave. She even hammered out a deal with the Camparelli-Zukhov megasyndicate based on her past service to the underworld.

Villa Orzaiz (Valencia, Spain)

The site of the first meeting between The Mathematician and Count Orzaiz, the villa is the best known Teragen enclave and, for this reason, heavily monitored by just about every intelligence agency under the sun.



This suits Orzaiz and the Teragen just fine because it lets them know who is watching. The villa hosts a seemingly constant party, open to starlets, wannabe Terats and anybody else who is on the "A list."

Villa Orzaiz sits on a cliff, overlooking the Mediterranean. As one of the Orzaiz's ancestral homes, there is more to the villa than meets the eye. It contains countless secret passages and chambers where Terats can meet in safety and oubliettes where prisoners can rot for decades.

The Catacombs (Venice, Italy)

Located in T2M Europe's own backyard, Leviathan's haven and hideout is an impressive, if decrepit, enclave. Here, Leviathan delves deeper and deeper into the world of Taint, experimenting and evolving into an even more hideous monster. A gracious host, all Terats are invited to the Catacombs, but most find its atmosphere disturbing and alien — even for Terats.

Africa

From a Teragen perspective, Africa is the sight of the gravest crimes against novas. The Equatorial Wars set the "humanitarian" precedent of elite-on-elite warfare, and Utopia used novas like mules to transform the Ethiopian highlands. Africa made novas into tools instead of gods. The Teragen has relatively little respect in the region, although the Companions do have a presence in Tunisia and Algeria. The region's elites and petty dictators do provide a good pool of recruits and tools, however, and it is one that the Primacy has exploited. Nova Vigilance's 2007 murder of South Africa's Minister of Home Affairs has put regional governments on alert, but intrigued some African radicals.

The Nursery (Aruwimi River, Zaire)

Although most Terats know of its existence, only a few know of the Nursery's actual location. In the interior of Zaire, Bounty oversees the largest Teragen crèche, home to nearly a dozen Terat children. Although most have yet to erupt, they are nonetheless among the world's only nova offspring. Most Teragen acknowledge the living treasure of the children, and all take their protection seriously. The Nursery was once a research facility owned and operated by Horizon, Altaz Zia's former employer, and for this reason, is well equipped and defended.

Asia

Asia is the land of Teragen opportunity. Both Japan and China distrust Utopia, and that creates room to maneuver for the movement. Japan, always seeking nova-inspired innovation, is especially fertile ground. India, however, is by far the best place for the Teragen. The presence of glamorous Mumbai and murderous Kashmir on the same sub-continent fuels both nova ego and anger. This makes it a prime recruiting ground.

The Purity Clinic (Mumbai, India)

Sin-Eater's home and a Casablanca enclave, the Purity Clinic offers the Nova Age equivalent of plastic surgery. Nova luminaries and celebrities from all over the

world come to the Purity Clinic to have Sin-Eater "remove" their aberrations — for a price, of course. After hours and behind close doors, those Terats looking for a place to crash or hide out in Asia are welcome. Although The Mathematician has an office and enclave in Japan, younger Terats prefer the jet-setting Purity Clinic, allowing the Casabancas access to them. Narcosis of the Pandamonium also has a home in Calcutta, which diverts some attention away from the clinic.

CORE Tower (Tokyo, Japan)

Benefitting from Japan's isolationism from the rest of the world in general and Utopia in particular, The Mathematician's corporate fiefdom of CORE International has flourished in the Orient. Here, relatively free from Utopia's restrictions on technological development and unhindered by baseline ethics, CORE is pushing the envelope on a number of questionable and potentially dangerous technologies. If the Teragen needs anything built or manufactured — like additions to Synapse's computer — CORE Japan handles the request. The Teragen's biggest enclave in Asia, CORE Tower pushes up between the other skyscrapers in Tokyo and briefly stood as the world's tallest building. CORE also has regional offices in Hong Kong, Taipei, Seoul and Singapore (not to mention Santiago, Chile; London and San Francisco).

The Middle East

The Arab World was largely unknown territory to the Teragen until the arrival of Tarik ibn'Mahmoud. His Companions give the Teragen a network of sympathetic novas throughout the region, although their overtly Islamic nature has antagonized the Israelis, who are closer to Utopia. The Casabancas and some others have noticed, however, that their contacts in the region must always go through Tarik, and they are trying to establish some independent channels. Shrapnel has some ties with Egyptian elites, and this could break Tarik's monopoly.

The Badanah Complex (Saudi Arabia)

Tarik's "gift" to the Teragen is the isolated encampment of Badanah. Hidden deep in the desert, the complex is becoming a retreat for Terats and a research complex for the movement. By bribing the Saudi royal family with promises of technological breakthroughs, Tarik has bought the Teragen a safe enclave. He hopes to lure the movement's luminaries here to gain power over them, but he may also be unwittingly sabotaging his own interests. Indeed, Badanah could allow other Terats better access to the Companions and the Middle East as whole, making Tarik himself expendable.

The Many Roles of Divis Mal

"Homo sapiens novus, I know your worth, I sense your frustration and I have seen your destiny; hear me now...." Thus began *The Null Manifesto* by Divis Mal. It

was October 31, 2005, when Mal pirated the airwaves and issued his decree. The world sat back in shock and disbelief. Was this yet another H.G. Wells homage on the 72nd anniversary of the *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast? It was too odd not to be a practical joke, but Mal, resplendent in quantum fires that danced with his every word, was too persuasive not to take seriously. When the performance ended, it was all too true. The world's rocky courtship with Mal and his Teragen had begun.

Quantifying Mal — full irony intended — is a difficult endeavor. When the nascent Teragen first invited Divis Mal into their fold, he had already undergone the Chrysalis at least thrice. His evolved perception of the world was very different from and his mastery over his own abilities was far superior to that of any other nova. The closest to him remained Scripture, but even he treated his companion with open reverence. Mal was and still is an alien in the Teragen. His passage demands awed silence; his words, no matter how mundane, seem evocative and cryptic, as if hiding deeper meaning.

Mal's Effect upon the Teragen

The Teragen would not be the movement it is today were it not for Mal's association. By propelling its agenda into the public eye, he forced the Teragen to stand up and be counted. The movement's popularity rose because Mal associated with it, and its ranks swelled because Mal was the newest trend. As time went on, those with sincere political ambitions or those who truly believed in the spirit of the manifesto joined because the Teragen gave their anger a voice. While it pushed the organization into legitimacy, it stratified the membership as well.

The first faction joined the Teragen for the sake of popularity. They flocked to Divis Mal because he was a fiery political leader who fit the role of the romanticized rebel fighting for his beliefs. Not since the likes of Karl Marx, Malcolm X and Harvy Milk had the world seen one person so capture the spirit of change. Mal was an instant icon for a generation lost in the accomplishments of *Homo sapiens novus*.

Baselines and novas alike wanted to be part of history, part of the adventure. They wanted to say they were with Divis Mal during the nova march on Washington or when he was plotting the downfall of capitalism. Some even joined the Teragen because it was kitsch. In a decade filled with broad-shouldered heroes saving the world, Mal was pirating airwaves and making proclamations like some bad 60s super-villain. It was all too camp not to be a part of.

The second faction to join the Teragen in the wake of *The Null Manifesto* saw Mal as divine. Surrounded by quantum fires and possessing aching beauty, Mal struck the perfect angelic figure. Those who yearned for a higher purpose sought him out. He was their hermit on the mountain, their barefoot Messiah, their guiding light. To them,

the Teragen was a congregation, not an organization, and because Mal encouraged this type of adoration, these lost souls found religious fulfillment under Scripture's guidance.

Unfortunately, these newcomers alienated many novas with more serious intentions. They despised the sheep and poseurs for lacking the backbone to find their own way in life, and many came to resent Mal for encouraging often-flagrant adulation. Only when Mal entered his fourth Chrysalis in 2006 did the political machinery begin to gain real momentum. By this time, the trend-setters left the Teragen out of boredom or they remained with factions like the Pandaimonion. The disenfranchised idealists joined the Cult of Mal in hopes of finding their niche. Still, they looked up to Mal as an icon beyond reach — the lonely tragic figure made heroic by greater responsibility.

The political arm remains divided regarding Mal. The more ardent rebels are frustrated by the way he caters to such mundane activities as ego baiting; the others hold Mal in greater esteem but are still uncomfortable with the religious phenomenon that surrounds him. They all recognize that the Teragen is on the verge of fracturing due to internecine conflict. Those who want to see the Teragen succeed realize that these splits exist largely because of Mal. His refusal to take a hard stance on anything, leaving Terats to find their "own path," is creating the Teragen equivalent of heresies. While some political activists want Mal out of the picture completely, most still believe he can make a difference if he takes a public stance on the Teragen's purpose. Everyone wonders, however, why he hasn't done so yet.

Mal's View of the Teragen

Ask a dangerous question, and you get a dangerous answer. To Divis Mal, the Teragen is his holy army, his divine (or infernal) host of warrior angels. He allows the Cult of Mal because it serves his purposes. He allows the poseurs in Pandaimonion because they too further his goals. While the friction between spirituality and politics is a new phenomenon for him, he allows the schism because it revolves around him. Neither side can agree on whether Mal is the religious figure Scripture portrays him to be or the political force of reckoning The Mathematician says he will one day become.

At his erupted core, Mal is a gentleman and an idealist. He can fight with the best of novas, but he will not take the Teragen in a given direction unless they are willing, and most importantly, he will not fight their battles for them. That is both his greatest strength and his greatest weakness as a leader. While The Apostle and Narcosis manipulate their followers through their abilities, Mal's control over his acolytes is stronger because they make willing choices. Mal knows that he cannot force the Teragen in a direction they do not want to go, so he goads and manipulates his followers into making their own decisions, for better or worse. Should the Teragen choose

to become a cult on par with the Church of the Immanent Escheaton, then he will act accordingly. Should the political ambitions of the Teragen win out, then Mal will be its icon as well.

Mal has faith that the Teragen will make the proper decision at the proper moment. Such is his faith in the One Race. *The Null Manifesto* was born of brilliance, but the great orator painted himself into a philosophical corner with his statement. Saying novas are more than human is fine, but how does one tell them not to act humanly, with the myriad foibles and character flaws that baselines are heir to? It remains the only existence they know and will remain so for years. Mal is free of baseline tethers and expects other novas to be as well, but he can only tell them to liberate themselves, and act as a role model. He cannot force enlightenment upon them.

Using the Monster, Marvel and Portent paths of Teras as a specific guideline, many members adopt one of these archetypal behaviors as part of their new identity. As with any religion, the values of Teras are only a framework to guide Terats until they attain understanding and learn to make responsible choices for themselves. It is a poor substitute for actual evolution, but it does serve as a stopgap. The Chrysalis is a truer method of transformation, but it is a frightening process. Mal holds this accomplishment over the others and, as such, can claim greater insight. How can someone truly fathom his methods, much less question them, when that person is an evolutionary throwback compared to him?

Unfortunately, Mal's time is running short. By not offering a direction or proper guidance to the Teragen, the schisms within it are growing too large for even him to bridge. Some people remain unwaveringly loyal, and that presents a problem; followers rarely advance solutions, they await answers. Mal often has more faith in those who oppose or question him; they are the ones acting with concerted effort to forge ahead. Although this group does not worship Mal, he has manipulated and awed enough people to take control of the situation once matters crystallize. Mal believes the time is fast approaching to prune the tree he has been nurturing and eliminate the unwanted members of the Teragen Pantheon in a "night of long knives." All that remains is to consult The Mathematician to learn the potential ramifications of his plot. How to do so without panicking Santiago, however, is another matter altogether....

The Coming Storm

As of June 2008, *The Null Manifesto* is not even three years old. Even going back to the very first roundtable meetings, which established the Teragen in 1999, the movement remains in its infancy. Rapid change, however, characterizes any revolutionary movement worth its salt and is a hallmark of the Nova Age itself. The Teragen is on the verge of

transforming itself into a more active, more cohesive movement, but that metamorphosis will not be easy. Given the powerful egos involved, conflict seems inevitable.

Two powerful and divergent forces drive this transformation. From the very summit of the movement, Divis Mal, father of the Teragen Pantheon, has emerged from his fourth Chrysalis. Two years ago, he told the Teragen to find its way, and now, he expects results. Many different Terats believe they know the best way to fulfill Mal's demands.

From the very roots of the movement, a growing number of young and radical novas call for the Teragen to take concrete and direct action against its enemies and against baseline society in general. These discontented Terats sense the weakness in Project Utopia and believe the time to strike is now; they have very little patience for the cautious ways of their elders.

So a settling of accounts seems unavoidable. With each passing day, Terats become more and more zealous in their beliefs; their tolerance for those they see as internal traitors or external enemies is wearing very thin. That Teragen violence has been relatively limited thus far is due only to the efforts of those few Terats who wish to forge alliances within the movement and even with other anti-Utopia groups like the Aberrants. Mal's return may have forced solidarity for the moment, but he is well aware that such solidarity is not durable.

Hidden Dangers

Novas are individualistic, even egocentric, in the extreme. The larger conflicts between radicals and conservatives and between politicians and spiritualists are just general trends within the Teragen; the actions of individuals often override such concerns. Just because two Terats are radical revolutionaries does not guarantee they will cooperate. Even within the rough-hewn cliques of the movement (like the Primacy or the Harvesters) there are hatreds brewing.

This egomania may be the gravest danger facing the Teragen. Effective action to advance the cause is unlikely if no one can cooperate. For all its flaws, Project Utopia is well organized, and its novas work well together. For now, because the Teragen has done little other than build up its reputation, they have not fallen under Utopia's full scrutiny. Were Terats to take to the streets in an outright revolution, however, a strong and united Utopia could crush them.

In many ways, however, the radicals among the Primacy and the Harvesters are right; the time to strike is now. In the wake of the Aberrant mess, Utopia is weak and divided, too busy covering its own ample posterior to act effectively against dedicated external enemies. The mere fact that the ragtag Aberrants have survived thus far is ample testament to Utopia's current weakness. If the Teragen allow Utopia the time to regain their unity and dedication, the Terats may well lose their only chance to defeat their greatest enemy.

In order to act, however, the Teragen must also contend with the vipers within its very membership.

Apostle and Judas

Marcel "The Apostle" Delorimier has the most inflated and destructive ego in the Teragen. Delorimier fancies himself to be Mal's most devoted follower, his apostle, and has forged a powerful clique of novas who similarly deify the movement's figurehead. The Cult of Mal is bound together by fanatical devotion not only to Mal, but also, increasingly, to Delorimier's specific interpretation of Mal's words. The Apostle's inhuman charisma and the drugs he produces from his own bloodstream make his hold over the cult almost unshakable. Unfortunately for Delorimier, he is trying to be the interpreter for a god who is more than capable of speaking for himself, and Marcel's constant twisting of Mal's words has not gone unnoticed.

Delorimier sees the world as divided between four types of people: the godhead to worship, the true believers to lead, the innocent to convert and the heretics to destroy. Individuals switch from one category to another with blinding speed in his mind, however. Faithful who question his rule or innocents who resist his word rapidly become heretics facing his wrath. Even those he worships can become tarnished. He has twice undergone the Chrysalis and both times he emerged with contempt for the person he once worshiped. In 2004, he emerged from his first transformation and suddenly looked on his mentor Caroline Fong as a weak, impure creature; he betrayed her to Utopia without hesitation and transferred his adoration to Scripture, the favored of Mal. Delorimier has recently emerged from a second Chrysalis convinced that Scripture is unworthy of Mal's love.

Unless someone is able to stop him, Delorimier's pattern of betrayal will continue unabated. He will put Scripture to the knife and take all his followers into his cult. Eventually, Mal too will appear tarnished in his eyes, and he will betray his own godhead and die as a result.

Current Plans

The Apostle is busy preparing to rid the Teragen of the "impure" Scripture, but such a betrayal requires a great deal of planning and resources. Delorimier has many projects underway, many of which require him to recruit new and young Terats.

- **The Four Horsemen:** The Apostle knows that many Terats, especially revolutionaries like the Primacy and Nova Vigilance, are not wholly faithful to Mal. Because of this, his cult needs its own enforcers, and the Four Horsemen fit that bill. The Apostle personally recruits young, angry novas as Horsemen, using his charisma and addictive powers to open their eyes to the ways of Mal. They then carry out whatever "direct interventions" Delorimier requires, be it to assassinate enemies, intimidate rivals or even defend worthy novas in need. The Apostle likes others to believe there are only four Horsemen, but membership actually rotates among a pool of recruits. This way, Delorimier may constantly recruit new members. The Horsemen (who may be men or women), all wear elite-style masks and black garb, although their identities are

only secret from those without contacts in the cult.

- **The Young Faithful:** The Apostle is very busy recruiting young, worthy novas into the Teragen in order to support his position. Fanatical zeal for Mal and Delorimier himself seems to measure worth, rather than any commitment to Teras or nova advancement. Clarion and his Kabal are a prime example of these recruits, but Delorimier is always looking for more. Young novas who have suffered trauma during their eruption (or their dealings with Utopia) make for excellent candidates.

- **Blood for the Cause:** In the same vein as his search for young zealots, The Apostle is also forging ties with the more radical elements already within the Teragen. He and Shrapnel may not see eye to eye on matters of political theory and philosophy, but they both agree that the time has come for action. He is happy to encourage her so that she may help him eliminate Scripture and The Mathematician. He can always dispose of her later.

- **The Utopia Problem:** The Apostle has a serious problem with Project Utopia. In 2004, he betrayed Caroline Fong to them, through what he hoped would be an anonymous tip. The recent capture of T2M member Saxon forced him to scramble to hide his involvement. The Apostle is now convinced that Utopia either knows of his action or has information that could lead his Teragen enemies to uncover his role. He is looking for any and all ways to uncover just how much Utopia knows.

- **The Soma Queen:** The Apostle has uncovered the fact that Narcosis is a major supplier of soma. Enticed by her beauty and the control she has over her own followers, Delorimier has become obsessed with her. He knows she wishes to bear Divis Mal's baby but is determined to sire her child instead. Narcosis recently suggested that Delorimier use his pharmacological powers to create a hormonal concoction that resembles the soma/cocaine cocktail popular in the nova underworld. His precise control provides a longer, more powerful high among those novas who take it. This very rare wonder drug is known as "Hype" or HCS (as in hypercombustion soma) in the nova party scene. Both Delorimier and Narcosis use Hype to lure novas into their entourages. Unknown to The Apostle, Narcosis is currently in negotiation (through proxies) with the Medellin cartel to produce a synthetic derivative.

- **The Patsy:** Eventually, The Apostle will need someone to actually kill Scripture and take the fall for it. He used Utopia's Saxon for this purpose against Caroline Fong, but that seems to be coming back to haunt him. This time he is seeking out candidates among the Teragen, especially the young novas now flocking to the movement. He hopes to find a young radical, perhaps a member of the Primacy, to carry out his dirty work. He is being hasty, however, and has no concept of Scripture's full power; any attempt made on Scripture's life is doomed to failure as the patriarch of the Teragen sheds his quiet holy form for one much more terrifying. In the meantime, The Apostle observes candidates from a distance, sometimes antago-

nizing them and leading them to believe that Scripture and other spiritualists are traitors to the movement. Using his narcotic powers, he plans to lower the inhibitions of his top candidates until one of them draws blood.

The Desert Viper

The Apostle is a grave danger to the movement, but at least there are those who oppose him. Tarik ibn'Mahmoud has managed to play his dangerous games without antagonizing others in the movement. By the time his machinations become known, it may be far too late. Tarik's greatest asset in the game of intrigue is the simplicity of his motivations. He does not share the lofty goals of most Terats. He does not deify Mal, want worshippers, hate baselines nor seek justice for all novas. Tarik believes in the simple acquisition of power. He prefers subtle means, but intimidation, blackmail and murder are all part of his repertoire.

By and large, Tarik views the Teragen as simply an avenue for power, just like the PLO, Islam and the stricken OPEC countries. He does respect the basis of *The Null Manifesto*, however. Tarik believes that novas are a young people and he sees himself as the modern equivalent of a conquering chieftain. Building a grand civilization and a holistic philosophy are issues for future generations, issues that will be moot unless he leaves them a powerful empire. Tarik concentrates on conquest, using lies instead of soldiers and pathogens as weapons.

In the short term, Tarik is working to make sure the Teragen is indebted to him, just as much of the baseline power structure of the Middle East already is. He has established the Saudi enclave in Badanah as a way to ensure that all Terats value his contributions. Meanwhile, he plants the dormant seeds of disease among as many Terats as he can. When he must finally part company with the movement, he will be able to weaken them or even hold them hostage to his will.

Current Agendas

Tarik always has many plans in the works. He has survived in the tumultuous Middle East by always having many contingencies. Young Terats could become involved in any number of his plans.

- **Children of Badanah:** The opening of the Badanah enclave in Saudi Arabia serves many purposes for Tarik. It furthers his hold over both the Teragen and the Saudi royal family and also draws attention away from his numerous other holdings. He pretends to open his doors to the rest of the movement and in so doing keeps his resources well hidden. The most important gambit in Badanah, however, is the housing of some of the Teragen children. He proposes to use Badanah to raise the children under Bounty's supervision, therefore ensuring the safety of the next generation should the Nursery in Zaire come under attack. His true plan is to infect the children, allowing him to gain an iron hold on the next generation of novas. He is unsure whether Bounty could detect the infections, however, so he is proceeding with caution.

He has also infected other Terats, including Altaz "The Apothecary" Zia. Tarik infected Zia on their first meeting, before he fully understood the Harvester's ability to manipulate cellular structures. Tarik fears that Zia may be able to detect the dormant plague within him.

- **Companions No More:** The Companions, Tarik's loose association of Middle-Eastern novas, depend on him for access to the world at large. He ensures this dependence as a means of keeping them under his control. There are some cells of Companions, however, who have realized that he is using them. One group in Damascus has made its way into Lebanon, trying to make contact with some of the foreign elites operating there. Another Egyptian nova has started making ties of his own across North Africa, trying to circumvent the Companions altogether. Tarik's current plans with the Teragen have distracted him, so he has yet to see the growing dissent in his own ranks, but he will move with ferocity against the troublemakers, should they reveal themselves.

- **The World of the Prophet:** The Islamic world is much larger and even more complex than the Middle East alone. Using the model of the Companions, Tarik has been expanding his web across the globe. He has established cells in several sub-Saharan African countries, as well as Pakistan and Indonesia. Throughout his sphere of influence, he has been fostering internal conflict. The climate of tension and chaos gripping Islam in the wake of the Sunni-Shi'ite split regarding novas, the collapse of oil prices and the crises in Beirut and Kashmir, only helps Tarik manipulate his various pawns' fears. Some Muslim novas (and baselines) are working to restore order and a climate of trust in the region, and Tarik is considering acting against them.

- **Palestine:** Project Utopia's intervention to mediate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is grating for Tarik. Not only would a peaceful resolution lessen the tension he profits from, but Utopia and the Israeli elites also provide examples of other options for Arab novas. Tarik is determined to be the only option for his Companions, and he is trying to sour the move toward lasting peace. Extremists on both sides are already active, but Tarik's plans target Utopia directly. By leaking some proof of Teragen activity in the region and sacrificing a few of his cells, he has provoked Utopia manhunts in Gaza, Arab Jerusalem and Amman. This has infuriated Palestinians, making many believe Utopia and Israel are in cahoots against the Palestinian Authority. Investigators from all sides are trying to uncover the truth, but Tarik has thus far covered his tracks.

Other Dangers

Tarik and The Apostle are the most active dangers lurking within the Teragen, with their ongoing plots, betrayals and growing networks of agents and followers, but there are certainly other hot spots in the movement.

One conflict that has yet to reach its full potential surrounds those who know the most of Taint and the philosophy of Teras. To one degree or another, all dedicated Terats know that Taint is nothing but a sign of the continued,

unchannelled evolution of a nova. Teras allows a nova to enter a Chrysalis, which helps to direct this evolution, allowing the Terat to retain a much greater degree of sanity. There is growing debate and vehemence, however, over just what evolutionary path novas should take. The Harvesters, the most patently monstrous grouping within the Teragen feel that novas should abandon all pretense of humanity. They see those who cling onto their humanity, whether by avoiding the Chrysalis (like Raoul Orzaiz or The Confederate) or that emerge as some sort of obscenely perfect human (like The Apostle), as degenerates. Complicating matters is The Apothecary, the seemingly human "keeper" of the Harvesters. He understands Taint but seems not to have embraced its physical aspects, and many in his very movement have begun questioning his commitment. Others versed in Taint, like Sin-Eater, have kept their distance from the Harvesters, but the call to abandon all humanity grows more and more seductive every day. A bizarre race war between Tainted and "human" novas may well be brewing within the Teragen, only the fear that Mal would side with the human faction prevents the Harvesters from striking now.

The generalized pressure building within the movement is, ironically, now most visible among those only marginally committed to its ideals. There are roughly 60 novas currently dedicated to the Teragen and recognized as such by other members, but there are many times that number of poseurs who like to call themselves Terats because it makes them cool or infamous. These wannabes present a potential resource for those trying to lead the movement in one direction or another — if these fashion victims can become loyal followers, the nova who controls them gains the power of numbers. The poseurs, in turn, sense this growing opportunity and are going to greater and greater lengths to prove themselves worthy of elevation. The Pandaimonion is the most successful group of pretenders, but many others are ready and willing to make the effort. Because they often have little contact with any truly influential Terats, they try to prove their worth by competing with other poseurs. This competition can be violent grudge matches or simple bragging about who has the best so-called enclave. The current contenders for that title are the Pandaimonion's Caribbean resort on the isle of St. Kits and the parties thrown by Raoul Orzaiz at his Spanish villa to distract enemies watching him. Any young Terat who manages to make a name for herself will rapidly attract fanboys (and girls) trying to ride her coat-tails and others trying to bring her down. The danger of all this lies in the fact that those Terats trying to elevate poseurs care little for the fact that they have no real understanding of the movement's beliefs. These novas just want to party and be feared.

The Future of the Teragen

Those familiar with *Trinity*, White Wolf's game of heroic science fiction, know that the conflicts within the Teragen and with the world at large will eventually have

devastating effects. Indeed, in the next 50 years, novas and baselines will clash with increasing brutality, until an all-out war breaks out. At the peak of this devastating conflict, Divis Mal will lead "his people" off planet Earth. Although few series will last for decades of game time, Storytellers may find it useful to know some of what occurs in the years to come. The Teragen will play a central role in the chaos, after all.

Bending (and Breaking) the Future

Because *Aberrant* shares the same fictional universe as *Trinity* (which is set in the 22nd century), supplements like the *Teragen Sourcebook* must make concessions to future events established in other books. This section shows you in broad strokes where events are headed. You, however, are under no obligation to stick to any canonical timeline. Your series can go off in any direction you find rewarding. The *Aberrant War* need not be in the distant future, either; it could be right around the corner.

Even if you want to maintain some connection to the established course of events, you shouldn't fear tweaking them to suit your needs. **Chapter Two: Storytelling** provides you with several ways to use the coming conflicts within the Teragen in your series. Who survives, who rises to power and who falls by the wayside are all up to you, as are just how these things happen.

Aberrant, although a coherent fictional setting, is mostly intended to be a game for your enjoyment (and that of your players). Go ahead, *play* with it!

The Night of Long Knives

In the short term — the time frame of a Teragen series — the biggest event to come will be a bloody transformation of the movement itself. This sourcebook dedicates many pages to the various conflicts, factions and powerful people within the Teragen because these opposing forces will clash more and more. The return of Divis Mal is quickly sweeping away the last vestiges of restraint within the movement. The loose, cooperative nature of the Teragen will give way to a more solid revolutionary movement centered on a smaller group of leaders. Just who these leaders will be is likely to be settled in blood.

This "Night of Long Knives" will occur somewhere in the next one to five years. Exactly when, and its exact form are not set in stone and could make for an excellent Teragen series (see pages 110-115 for advice on creating just such a series). There are a few general trends that will shape the long-term future of novas, however.

The Death of Elders

Even discounting the overarching paternal influence of Divis Mal, the Teragen family has a few prominent elder siblings who are responsible in large part for its current shape and focus. The Mathematician and Scripture are the most obvious and respected elders, but the Teragen's own fertility goddess Bounty and the Harvester keeper The Apoth-

ecary also have a parental influence over many Terats. Currently, they are the dominant powers in the movement.

The Teragen's transformation, however, may take its toll among the old guard. The fires of revolution burn strongest among the young and many feel that the movement's elders have failed to foster the liberation of novas they claim to desire. Regardless of allegiance, the young will come to see the elders as expendable. The Apostle, once Scripture's most loyal follower, is already readying to sacrifice him for his own glory. The Mathematician's allies are few and far between. Bounty's influence depends on cooperation; in a bloody conflict she could find herself with very few friends. The Apothecary is already losing some of his charges' support because he is too human for their twisted tastes. Worse still, all the elders are essentially blind to the threat from below. They continue to work against each other, unaware that they could be writing their own death warrants.

The Rise of Radicals

The death or exile of the various elders of the Teragen will leave the field open for the younger members, many of whom advocate a violent revolution against Utopia and baseline society in general. Political terrorists like Shrapnel, monstrous creatures like Leviathan and dogmatic crusaders like The Apostle will in all likelihood rule the day. The recruiting of more and more poseurs who only wish to revel in their power and superiority will also encourage this trend. The radicals also have an ad-

vantage because of the weakness of Utopia and the arrival of the Aberrants. Utopia's scrambling to recapture public confidence will make them ever more vulnerable to attacks, rewarding acts of violence and terror that today might get the entire movement crushed under the weight of T2M. The Aberrants, in turn, will provide a more attractive venue for novas who wish to oppose Utopia without destroying the world at large. Even some current members of the Teragen will likely become closer to the Aberrants, slowly carrying the philosophy of Teras over to that movement as well.

Divis the Dictator

The Night of Long Knives is a dangerous ploy for Divis Mal. It could transform him from a leader by example into a dictator. When Divis sanctions the elimination of some of his key supporters in the Teragen, it will cause a massive schism within the group. Many will simply accept this betrayal as Divis Mal's "wisdom" — he ordained it, therefore it shall be done. Others, however, will not be so accepting.

Divis has always advocated novas finding their own path in life, but his patience is finite. There are certain Terats who refuse to "get it," and in his impatience, Divis helps to separate the wheat from the chaff. Following the Night of Long Knives, many Terats become disillusioned with Mal. He assassinated those who disagreed with his view of the movement, regardless of whether



they were in the right or wrong. Terats believed they existed in a true egalitarian process, where their words had merit. The turmoil, however, reveals that they only had "free" expression as long as it fit within Divis' finite tolerances. This could very well be a shattering experience for some of his followers. Those who remain, however, accept his leadership as never before.

The Night of Long Knives sets the Teragen in motion. It goes from a democracy to a dictatorship, from seeking to directing, from movement to crusade.

The Aberrant War

The internal turmoil and radicalization of the Teragen ultimately gives way to increasing conflict with the world at large. The unavoidable progress of Taint — even with the Teragen's Chrysalis — leads novas at large away from baseline humanity. The more monstrous they become, the more likely they are to see eye to eye with

the Teragen. Even the Aberrants, who still retain some degree of humanity, become more and more alienated from a fearful and angry humanity. Every year brings more Teragen attacks on baseline targets, more proof that Utopia is somehow corrupt and more reasons for baselines around the world to hate and despise all novas.

What were once the most radical expressions of Teragen philosophy become the movement's mainstream and the vanguard of generalized nova feeling. The erupted come to believe that their relationship with baselines is a zero-sum game; any baseline victory is a nova defeat, and vice versa. Calls for extermination grow louder, with Divis Mal and his cohorts sitting at the burning center of it all. The Aberrant movement and others try their best to maintain an uneasy peace, but the slide toward apocalypse seems unstoppable.

In 2047, 41 years from the current date, all pretense of peace dies when the United Nations declares novas to be a threat to humanity. The Aberrant War begins, and it is bloody indeed. Some novas side with humanity (trying to find a compromise solution), but most have little choice but to end up fighting side by side with the Teragen or join them outright. The combatants reduce large swathes of countryside to smoking rubble, and it seems like humanity is headed toward utter devastation.

Finally, humanity plays a doomsday gambit. They threaten to use orbital weapons to reduce the planet to a smoking ball of ash unless the novas leave. Divis Mal, perhaps out of an enlightened sense of his people's destiny or perhaps because he has no other choice, leads his people off Earth and to the stars. Some will return, but that is the tale of Trinity, not Aberrant.

The Blackburn Hotel (New York City, USA)

This section should give you a concrete idea of how a Teragen enclave functions and provide you with a possible setting for your own Teragen series. No two enclaves are exactly alike, but the Blackburn has all the essentials: a safe haven for Terats, a cadre of local keepers and some of its own secrets to hide. The Blackburn is also tied into the larger nova social scene and so gives you a way to introduce the Teragen into your series without the need for cheesy nefarious schemes.

Overview

The Blackburn Hotel, located just north of Marcus Garvey Memorial Park, was once one of the hotspots of the Harlem Renaissance. Blacks and whites alike flocked into its art-deco ballroom to hear jazz greats and revel in the nightlife. Blacks could step away from the injustices of the outside world, let loose and smile despite

The Seeds of History

The Teragen plays a major role in the lead-up to the Aberrant War. When novas radicalize, they move toward the movement and its "us-or-them" philosophy. Beyond this general role, however, there are already, in 2008, some members in place who end up making their mark on those turbulent times. Storytellers can freely modify these events, but they include:

- **The Wycoff Detonation:** In 2008, Calvert Wycoff's father Jeb is a baseline acolyte of the Harvesters, living in their Midwestern enclave of Heartland and absorbing a fundamentalist Christian offshoot of their fascination with aberration and its connection to original sin. By the time of the Aberrant War, Calvert has become a powerful nova and leads the fanatical Prophets of Jehovah. In 2054, he destroys himself in a Taint-ridden detonation that causes a terrible blight throughout much of the American Midwest. Even in 2120, twisted Aberrants lurk in this tainted region.

- **The OpNet Crash:** At the climax of the Aberrant War, in 2061, Alex "Synapse" Doan is ambushed by a Taint-maddened nova named Mungu "Backlash" Kuwasha. The two fight *within* the OpNet for hours. The battle wreaks havoc on information and telecommunications systems across the planet. Synapse's greater familiarity with the OpNet, derived from "living" in it for decades, ultimately gives him the advantage, allowing him to lead his attacker into a lethal trap, but Kuwasha's death scream takes the form of an electro-optical pulse that utterly annihilates the OpNet, forcing Synapse back into his withered body and bringing the conflict between nova and baseline to a head.

- **Adios, Mexico:** Bad times are coming for Mexico. In 2043, the revolutionary nova known only as Feathered Serpent attempts to raise the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán from under the modern metropolis of Mexico City. The resulting earthquake destroys the city and kills over a million people. The enigmatic Serpent is the mentor of the Terat Matador.

the harsh realities of the day. The Blackburn fell on hard times during the Great Depression, and became a low-income hotel and slowly dilapidated. The Nova Age has meant a rebirth for the old dame, though, and a return to her roots: a place for novas to let loose away from those who keep them down.

The renewed Blackburn is the brainchild of Terat hacker-god (and geek-kid) Synapse. Using his mastery over computer systems, he purchased the run-down Blackburn for next to nothing, had his withered body transferred there and transformed the inside through proxies. New York City charities helped pay to have the art-deco lobby and ballroom refurbished in the name of art, while CORE International transformed the sub-basement into Synapse's computerized playpen. Now, the ground and first floors have become a lavish club, almost on par with the Amp Room as a "place to be" among novas. The Blackburn cultivates New York edge and attracts a harsher crowd, including elites and XWF Wrestlers. *The Village Voice* recently compared the club to "a vodka martini mixed with battery acid."

Behind the public façade of nova chic, Synapse has transformed the upper floors of the hotel into a full-fledged enclave. Several Terats and Teragen sympathizers live here, and others are always welcome. Synapse keeps his fingers in many pies, so most factions are well received. Nova Vigilance has an espe-

cially strong presence, and the Blackburn is the closest they have to a "secret headquarters."

Life at the Blackburn

The semi-public face of the Blackburn is as a nova-centered club. It operates three nights a week (Wednesday, Friday and Saturday), with private functions available for "preferred clients" on other nights. Wednesdays are for jazzy decadence reminiscent of the hotel's roots, while the weekend is for hard-edged, angry music and thrashing crowds. Both scenes are open to baselines, although they are never guaranteed admission. Fridays and Saturdays usually attract throngs of baseline Teragen groupies, masking any real Terats among the attendees. Nova-only events occur every month, often running throughout the weekend and attracting dozens of guests (impressive given the rarity of an M-R node). Several nova-only rooms provide privacy on other nights if need be.

The club is the scene of a great deal of illegal or marginally legal activity. Drugs flow freely, people have been bought and sold, and most sins are fair game. This air of danger and secrecy is the key to the club's success. You have to be "in" to get in the door or even know exactly where the door is.

Synapse keeps the police at bay with some bribery, some information (on non-Teragen matters) and through judicious use of the New York City telephone grid. Calls



placed from the vicinity of the Blackburn to the police (either 911 or other numbers) are routed through Synapse. After posing as a police officer to determine the nature of the complaint, Alex either connects them to the number they were originally calling or handles the call (and possibly the caller) himself. He also makes sure that the Blackburn is free from electronic surveillance.

Features

Most visitors only ever see the two adjoining ballrooms and the lobby, which together form the core of the nova club. Rumors about the rest of the hotel abound among visitors, but very few people have visited more than one of the private rooms. Only Terats know the full extent of the facility, and Synapse keeps secrets even from them.

The Nightingale Room

A lavish room with a private bar and bay windows overlooking the main ballroom, this enclave of decadence is reserved for novas only. Pandamonion street contacts ensure that soma/cocaine cocktails are always available, and the legendary super-drug hype has been known to pop up here as well. On Wednesday night, with live jazz filtering up from below, the room is home to an invitation-only poker game. Mega-Charismatic bluffers face off against inhumanly perceptive opponents in a game whose stakes often top the million-dollar mark.

Upper Apartments

The upper floors of the hotel are a series of fairly luxurious apartments and offices. Terats stay on the top floors, while other guests of the management use apartments on the middle floors. A small and discreet baseline staff maintains the apartments, although part of the top floors is off-limits to them as well. Synapse has seen to it that specialized rooms exist to cater to all Teragen tastes: from chapels to Mal for his friends in the cult, to rooms lined with barbed wire for the more flagellant Harvesters. Raoul Orzaiz also maintains apartments here and offices on one of the middle floors.

The Bowels

Nova Vigilance uses the Blackburn as their American gathering point and several members currently call it home. They have created a small jail and interrogation center in the basements, where they may bring prisoners who need questioning. NV usually uses lethal means of intervention, however, so the Bowels haven't seen much use yet.

The Hub

Synapse's atrophied physical body lies in a life-support device surrounded by one of the world's most advanced super-computers. This great assemblage is tucked into a reinforced shelter deep beneath the Blackburn. Connected to satellite uplinks, the OpNet and the NYC power grid, the Hub gives Synapse access to a world of telecommunications and power systems. He has kept the Hub's existence hidden from all others, having long ago arranged for accidents to silence the workers who built it.

Residents

The Blackburn is Synapse's home turf, but several other people now call the hotel home or visit it frequently. The jet-setting Raoul Orzaiz uses it as his *pied-à-terre* in New York, and Narcosis sometimes does the same. The more stable residents include:

- **Jesus "Matador" Morales:** A Mexican Terat and core member of Nova Vigilance, Matador is in New York because too many people are hunting him in his native land. Using the alias Rafael Veracruz, he sometimes mingles with the crowds in the club. For more on Matador, see page 135.

- **Julianne "Jester" Beaumont:** A DeVries-contracted nova, Beaumont is a frequent participant in the Wednesday-night poker games. Her political conscience has been slowly awakening since the NV attack on DeVries headquarters, and she is currently Raoul Orzaiz's prime target for recruitment into the movement.

- **Hadrian Smythe:** A middle-aged baseline lawyer, Smythe is the stoic representative of "Mr. Jefferies," the legal owner of the Blackburn. Smythe handles all business matters and deals with the authorities if need be. Smythe's daughter Emelia erupted in 2006 and quickly transformed into a terrifying, though brilliant, insectile creature. She is currently a resident of Heartland, and Smythe's services are the payment for her care.

- **Sloppy Joe:** A monstrous Terat, Joe's body is a mass of viscera held together only by a force field he generates. Joe hangs with Nova Vigilance, but he met Sophia Rousseau at a Blackburn party and has become an informer for her Aberrants. For more on Sloppy Joe, see p. 139.

- **Bridgett Caulder:** Once an NYPD homicide cop, Caulder is now a young Terat who runs a discreet nova detective service out of an upper floor office. Her services are usually free to fellow Terats, but other novas can also hire her expertise — for a hefty sum. For more on Bridgett Caulder, see p. 137.

Possible Stories

You can use the Blackburn in any way you see fit, but here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- A Mexican elite called Palma starts attending the Blackburn. He is looking for Matador, a wanted revolutionary in his country, and figures the Terat will show up here eventually. How can Palma be eliminated without attracting too much attention to the enclave?

- Nova Vigilance kidnaps a member of the Church of Michael Archangel and sequesters her in the Bowels. Unfortunately, she escapes into the main ballroom in the middle of the Friday-night madness.

- A young female nova bursts into the Wednesday-night jazz scene screaming that Utopia wants to kill her baby. Several Utopia-friendly novas are in attendance, but she keeps calling for the Teragen to help her. Should she be sacrificed in the name of security?

CHAPTER TWO: STORYTELLING

You now know much of what there is to know about the Teragen, and now is the time to use that knowledge. This chapter gives you a host of resources that will make it easier to run an **Abserrant** series featuring Terats as players' characters, allies or antagonists. The first section provides plentiful advice on creating a Teragen series of your own. Next you'll find portrayal notes for the Teragen and its various luminaries. These will help you use the movement whether your players portray Terats or not, either as allies or enemies. Finally, we provide *The Night of Long Knives*, an outline for a series centered on the strife within the movement.

Teragen Series

So, you've read through most of this book and are itching to run a Teragen series, to play with the bad boys of **Abserrant**. Centering a series on the Teragen (as either protagonists or antagonists) can be very rewarding. Not only does it allow you to focus on a different side of **Abserrant**, but it also gives you a chance to let your hair down, so to speak. This doesn't mean that Teragen series are mindless frag-fests of chaos, destruction and villainous behavior. On the contrary, such series touch on a number of the more salient themes running throughout **Abserrant** and permit you to explore them in a new light.

One of the first questions you should ask yourself when thinking of running a Teragen series is why? Without answering this basic question, you risk losing control of the series and having it devolve into something you never intended. There is no disguising the fact that while some Terats are revolutionaries, they all define themselves according to their otherness. The temptation, therefore, is for the players to go overboard, to transform a Teragen series into something it is not. As a Storyteller, you have to exercise caution and a certain amount of control and direction. Don't force your views of the Teragen on your players, but understand that you all need to find a happy medium.

Ultimately, a Teragen series can take on any number of roles, guises and styles. It's a diverse enough group that, with a little creativity, you can transform into whatever suits you (and we encourage this). However, you must first decide what you want to do, and this is what this section is all about.

Villains?

Most of us have an almost unnatural attraction to the dark. Like an eerie beacon it attracts us, lures us to movies, arcades and roleplaying games. It used to be that people played the knights in shining armor and wise wizards, not anymore. Roleplaying allows us to explore issues and situations in a controlled and safe environment, and occasionally playing the "bad guys" can give you new perspectives. Playing the villains does not mean you can do whatever you want — in the game or in real life. The attraction to play the "bad guys" is always strong, but unfortunately, to some it is nothing more than a license to have their characters kill everything in sight while claiming they're playing "in character." That is not roleplaying.

In truth, nobody is a villain because of what they wear on their cuffs — evil is more than skin deep. The Teragen is no different. Not to excuse its members, but they are products of the world of **Abserrant**. They are reacting to the treatment of novas, to the insidious ways in which Utopia controls them. While their methods are questionable, and some among their ranks are outright megalomaniacs, Terats generally believe in what they are doing. Unlike normal novas that are heroes to baselines, Terats see themselves as heroes to other novas.

Does this justify murder, terrorism and racism? No, but it makes Terats a good deal more than simple "villains."

The Basics

Some players will undoubtedly ask "why play the bad guys?" Fair question. Some troupes may prefer to leave the Teragen as Storyteller characters and antagonists — the adversaries against which their characters fight and define themselves. If this is how you want to use the Teragen, then this book gives you more than enough material to make Mal and his followers into complex and worthy opponents. However, if you are interested in stepping over the line and seeing things from a new perspective, then you've come to the right place.

The key to running a successful Teragen series, like any **Abserrant** series, is preparation. If you want your Teragen series to be more than mindless brutality, then it pays to keep elements like theme, mood and plot in mind when designing and scripting your series.

Theme

Themes are the invisible "glue" that binds individual stories into an epic series. They are best used subtly, allowing the players to connect the dots and come up with their own conclusions. In a Teragen series, themes give you, the Storyteller, the best tool to keep control over your series and avoid it from becoming a super-villain farce. Even in games where all you want is for the players to let loose, themes give you that extra cohesion that will make the series memorable. You don't have to be a literature major to choose a theme and apply it to your series; often, asking a question and keeping it in mind throughout the planning phase of the series is more than enough. *Aberrant's* theme of power is a good starting point: Does power corrupt absolutely? Are the Teragen really revolutionaries and nova-defenders, or do they just hide their megalomania behind these lofty ideals? *Aren't* novas superior to baselines? (Hint: if they're not, why are you playing one?) You could easily base a rewarding series around these simple questions.

While potential themes are endless, the ones below are especially appropriate for a Teragen series and have echoes throughout this book. Feel free to choose your own, but these serve as excellent starting points.

Choice

Choice is a powerful theme, especially when those exercising it have the power of gods at their fingertips. Being a member of the Teragen is all about making choices. Novas may not have any choice about erupting but they do in choosing what to do with their new gifts. The Teragen claims to be above human laws and governments, but what does this mean to individual Terats? Do they choose to act as they will, becoming tyrants? How far do they go?

A series using the theme of choice should obviously present the players with decisions to make. Avoid black and white choices; few things are so simple, especially in *Aberrant*. Each choice should propel the character further down the path of Teras or screaming back to her baseline roots. The characters should be aware of the repercussions of their actions.

Alienation

What must it feel like to be a nova, to find out one day that you have changed, become something so different that people either fear you or suffocate you with pleas for help? Everywhere, baselines open their arms to you, begging you to fix their problems for them; Utopia says you belong and then proceeds to "teach" you how to use your powers in a "productive and beneficial way." But no matter where you look, you just do not fit in. Old friends — even your family — are wary, and people sneer at you on the street; you can see "aberrants must die," graffiti on the walls. Then you realize that not only are you an outsider, but you no longer understand the baselines around you. Desperately you recede, shutting out the world, and before long, everything feels wrong — and then the Teragen shows you that you do indeed belong, just not in a baseline world.

Novas are the ultimate outsiders, the quiet kid in high school that goes off to college and comes back a 220-pound powerhouse with degrees in computer science and law. But the initial hurt and resentment still lingers. Humanity has a less-than-stellar track record when it comes to dealing with "the other," and its relationship with novas is no different. As a theme, alienation serves as a catalyst, a reason why the Teragen fights Utopia in particular and baselines in general. When they portray Terats, the players become the ultimate outsiders. How do they react to being different, to belonging to the One Race?

Freedom

In a world where Utopia has its hand in everything, controlling novas like they do, the Teragen represents freedom — a chance to forge one's own path. Rebels and malcontents, Terats are not happy letting things "be." They have had enough of baselines telling them what to do and how to use their powers. The Teragen, in its pursuit of freedom, is unaccountable for its actions; the whole world is its playground and often, instead of doing good, its members do more harm in the process. Unfortunately, few ever realize that with freedom comes responsibility.

Conflict

The Teragen, at its very core, is all about conflict; it defines everything the movement stands for. Like any good theme, conflict comes in layers. First, there is the inner conflict all Terats face, between their nova and baseline selves. Teragen members of this generation try to ignore that all of them, or almost all, were baselines first, and no matter how far they evolve, they'll never be able to completely erase what they were. Then, there is the conflict between the Teragen and the world at large. Like any revolutionary movement, the Teragen is quick to think everyone is gunning for it, and like a cornered animal, it lashes out. Finally, there is the growing conflict within the movement. While conflict is a destructive force, it is also a catalyst for change.

Mood

The complement of theme, mood gives your stories and series a certain feel and atmosphere. Where theme is the underpinning of your series, providing continuity from one story to the next, mood functions to highlight both theme and the events of each story. Unlike theme, mood can change from story to story or scene to scene, but it is usually best to limit yourself to a handful to keep your story emotionally centered.

Moods are best used in descriptions and in how others react to the characters. A simple description or dialogue highlighting a mood can do wonders for a story and really help draw the players in. Here are a few suggested moods for Teragen stories:

Danger

The Teragen exists on the edge, violence and conflict are never too far off. As such, its members live under a constant threat of imminent danger. Using danger as your mood is simple: Keep your players on their toes,

laden your descriptions with veiled threats, and demonstrate the possibility that anything and everything can occur at any moment — and without warning.

Fleshed

Beneath the ideological façade of the Teragen lies a tempest of pain, hate and loathing. The Teragen are a reactionary force; they've had enough. Such a mood underpins how characters react, and everywhere the players' characters should witness baseline and Terat atrocities and acts of violence.

Desire

With god-like abilities, novas have everything they could possibly want, and yet, their powers only seem to make their appetites grow. Ambition, greed and megalomania are all elements that you can use to showcase desire. While having desire and ambition is a good thing, it often consumes one and becomes an obsession.

The Plot

The last of the three elements that you should pay attention to before even thinking about the nuts and bolts of your Teragen series is plot. Don't get too wrapped up in details or try and hatch the world's most cunning plot. At this stage, all you really need is a simple idea of what you want to do. Take a moment to think about your story/series in broad strokes, and then, come up with a sentence to describe it. Use whatever inspires you, don't be ashamed of borrowing from other sources; it allows you to get the ball rolling, and within a short while, the concepts will be your own.

When thinking of your plot, try to have an idea of the beginning, middle and end of your series. Once more, don't get too complicated, a sentence for each is all you need. Stick to the basics. All you need at this moment is a rough idea of where you want to go. Do you want a series where the characters' cell battles T2M, or do you want a more clandestine series where the characters unravel the conspiracies of Utopia one secret at a time?

The Series

With the basics down pat, you can now start scripting your series, namely integrating the characters, their nemeses and what style of series you are going to run. Let's take a look at each of these in turn.

The Characters' Cell

The cell is the core of any series, it is around the players and their characters that the drama unfolds. At the same time, you do need to explain why the characters are working together — why are they members of the same cell (the Teragen equivalent of a team)? At this stage, it is usually a good idea to talk with your players and get an idea of the characters they plan on playing; doing this can help you find a common bond. While using the fact that they are Teragen is not enough, it does establish a foundation. Are the characters all members of Nova Vigilance? Are they Primacy radicals? Do they come

from different factions united by a common Archetype, foe or belief?

There are countless possibilities open to you to bring the Teragen cell together. For one, they could be wanted by Utopia, needing each other to escape the Project's clutches. One of the members of the Pantheon could serve as their mentor, using them to further her own agendas and bringing them together. Another way to justify the cell's existence is to tie it into the theme of your series. If you're using a theme like alienation or freedom, the characters could each share a common experience or characteristic that brings them together. One of the best ways to forge a group and cell identity among the characters is to have them tied to a particular location or enclave. Perhaps the characters are the guardians of a small enclave or, at least, regulars. Not only does this center your series, it gives the characters a common thread and you a resource to use.

Explaining why the characters are cellmates is only part of the equation. To achieve group cohesion, you must present the characters and their players with a reason to stay together. In short, the cell needs a purpose, and while long-term goals are good for this, nothing brings the characters together more than a common foe.

Antagonists

Just as every story needs its main characters, it needs antagonists to oppose and challenge the characters — to make them earn their victories, no matter how large or small. In *Aberrant*, antagonists and foes are paramount, they drive its conflict and story, and a Teragen series is no different. Next to your plot, your choice of antagonists will have the greatest impact on your series. A good nemesis is what differentiates a so-so series from a truly great one.

In a Teragen series there is no shortage of antagonists, and the characters will be beset on all sides by foes, including T2M, Project Utopia and the Directive. As with any revolutionary movement, the Teragen needs an oppressor to rally against — and Utopia fits this bill. It's imperative that you give your series' antagonists a "face." While it is unlikely (then again, what you do with your series is up to you) that the character cell will topple Utopia, they might be able to thwart the plans of a higher-up or even take down one of the stars of T2M.

The best way to think of antagonists is to picture a chess set. While putting the king in checkmate is the ultimate goal, the players' characters will encounter countless smaller victories and defeats as they square off against the king's pawns, rooks, bishops and finally his queen. In the beginning, the characters will be weak (relatively) and unable to tackle the bigger pieces, but as the series progress they will begin to challenge and even, by series' end, threaten the king.

When designing antagonists, make sure they are fleshed out and as "real" as possible — especially the main nemesis. This is the person who is going to hound

the characters at every turn and make their lives miserable. Take a moment to give the nemesis a motivation, detail what resources he has at his disposal and what his plans are. Why does he have it in for the players' characters, aside from the fact they are Teragen? More importantly, give him a weakness. It doesn't have to be obvious, and the characters should have to work hard to discover it, but don't make the nemesis unstoppable.

Series Concepts

To further help you get started, here are some basic series concepts that you can modify to your liking. They each have central themes, include a few story ideas and point to Terats who could be recurring characters. For a more detailed series outline, see *The Night of Long Knives* at the end of this chapter.

Revolutionaries

A revolutionaries series is probably the best way to run Teragen stories without the characters being absolute "villains." The powers that be — Utopia, Aeon and the world governments — are quick to call Terats terrorists, but the distinction between terrorist and freedom fighter has always been nebulous. If you want, you could turn such a series into a swashbuckling tale of Robin Hood or David versus Goliath (which is the Teragen is an interesting question), with the characters swinging from chandeliers at Utopia functions and taking the plight of

novas around the world to the streets. By the same token, a revolutionaries series could be gritty, a tale of struggle and survival where the Teragen have no choice but to respond with violence and atrocities. It is all a matter of perspective.

A revolutionaries series runs the gamut of potential stories, from clandestine operations in the jungles of Mexico, to shadowy conspiracies, to action-packed attacks on Utopia strongholds around the world.

When setting up a revolutionaries series, make sure the characters have good cause to fight the powers that be. Maybe they suffered directly at the hands of Utopia or were sent to Bahrain to die. Whatever the reason, the characters should not want to stop until they have won, and the line between insurgent and despot is often thin.

Possible Stories: Coming to the aide of the Aberrants and trying to win them over. Freeing Terats in Utopia's custody. Digging into the shady dealings of Proteus and Utopia. Forging an alliance with the Directive against Utopia.

Key Terats: Shrapnel, Geryon, Nova Vigilance and the Primacy in its less radical form. The Mathematician or Count Orzaiz as either mentors or antagonists.

Monsters

There are times when all you want to do is play the monster, to square-off against the heralds of justice and decency and give them a good pummeling. A villain series can be extremely fun, as long as you keep



a tight reign on things and the players behave themselves and actually roleplay. In such a series, the characters and the Teragen are truly all alone in the world, their nova supremacist agenda not endearing them to anyone except the sick and demented. Once again, a monster series needs a *raison d'être*, or it will be nothing more than mindless violence. Perhaps the characters escaped Bahrain and are determined to avenge themselves on the world. The characters could also be media stars, using their fame to further their own nefarious plots. The characters could be allies of The Apostle and are helping make his apocalyptic visions a reality. Finally, in stereotypical fashion, a monster series could pit the characters against T2M, as both groups try to beat the other. With a little thought, a monster series could be not just fun, but rewarding.

A monster series also highlights the continuing process of evolution and change the Teragen are undergoing. A monster series could easily become a tense race to unlock the secrets behind Taint, with the characters struggling against other Terats.

Possible Stories: Raiding Bahrain. Terrorizing and holding a city hostage. Targeting and assassinating leading baseline politicians who are either lackeys of Utopia or who enact anti-nova policies.

Key Terats: The Harvesters, Nova Vigilance, the Primacy, The Apostle, The Confederate, Narcosis.

Prophets of a New Age

Characterized by intrigue, social dynamics and conspiracies, a prophets series takes a different approach to the Teragen. Terats all accept that the One Race has a destiny, a part to play in the times to come. Trinity players are aware of the coming Aberrant War and the role Divis Mal plays in it. You can use future events to build a series that foreshadows the storm to come. This could be played as a straight up conspiracy game, where Divis Mal and Utopia know more, and the characters slowly become involved, or actually serve as the catalyst for events to come. Those who want to know more or want to use that knowledge for their own needs, besiege the characters. Advanced Storytelling techniques like parallel stories, foreshadowing and repetition are all appropriate in such a series.

As in any conspiracy series, you should know before hand what the "big secret" is and how it affects things. You should know the motivations behind the various characters (in and out of the shadows) and how the characters can become involved and eventually come out ahead. As opposed to a monster or revolutionaries series, a prophets series is composed of small character victories, but in the long run, they add up to a major revelation.

Possible Stories: Rescuing a nova's newborn child from Utopia. Infiltrating Project Proteus or the Triton Foundation.

Key Terats: Divis Mal, Scripture, Synapse, The Mathematician, The Apostle, Swarm Queen.

Portraying the Teragen

When Divis Mal demanded "do what thou wilt" in *The Null Manifesto*, he offered Terats unequalled opportunity to explore their individuality. As such, their reactions to outsiders and insiders differ according to political aims, religious viewpoints and past experiences. Certain Terats hate Utopia but are only suspicious of the Aberrants and pity the elites. Others try to convert Utopians, shun the Aberrants and treat elites with indifference. Keep this in mind in your stories, and you will avoid the easy four-color stereotype of the villainous Teragen. Terats are people trying to find their place in a very protean decade. Whereas baselines once only glimpsed the potential of wonder through books and movies, they can now look skyward to see people sailing the heavens. The change is even greater for novas in general and the Teragen specifically.

Imagine being gifted with powers to hurt or destroy at a whim. Beyond the immediate compulsion toward violent and wild behavior, there is a weight that comes with these quantum-laden gifts; there is a need to direct them. People cannot exist without something to fuel their ambitions or dreams, and erupting does not change that. If anything, it sparks a greater yearning to accomplish and build, because it empowers. There is potential, and where there is potential, there is hope.

Nobody exists simply to destroy or posture like a comic-book villain. People follow personal ethics and codes that guide their lives. Society sees a villain simply because such categories are convenient and require less thought from the bleating masses of ignorant sheep. Terats, however, pursue their goals because they believe they are right, because they can make a difference, because they recognize the injustice in the world and because they see the truth. Utopia tries to paint a picture of novas as clean and wholesome role models on par with contemporary legends. Terats are not blind. They see the truth, that novas are not humans, and they try to build from it; that is a terrifying prospect to a baseline world.

Only if you want to run a four-color series and need a cackling nemesis should you consider the Teragen as a simple assemblage of villains. It is better to see them as visionaries, missionaries, invaders, martyrs and, above all, agents of change. Understanding this goes a long way toward comprehending the Teragen model of Monster, Marvel and Portent.

Finally, remember that reactions differ according to profiles. Although Teragen group dynamics certainly have a hand in forging opinion, in the end it comes down to the specific relationship your characters build with individual Terats. These relationships can and should change over time. The following sections will give you insight as to how the most prominent Teragen cliques

relate to fellow Terats, other allies and their enemies. Consider these as notes regarding the relationships' starting point and allow it to evolve from there.

Fellow Terats: The Marvel

"My tribe and I against outsiders..." a Middle-Eastern maxim begins, referring to the progression of personal loyalty from tribe down to family, with each circle growing stronger and tighter. In the Teragen, bonds are strong between members of the same clique and less so between those of opposing factions — say those of a religious bent and those with political motivations. The bonds still exist, however, and Nova Vigilance will be damned if they allow any T2M goosestepper to ever, under any circumstances, lay a hand on a member of the Cult of Mal. Regardless of how one Terat feels about another, there are certain affronts that they will never abide.

The Teragen are at war with outsiders because they know their very lives are at stake. As such, they will do their utmost to support one another. Orzaiz and his Casablanecas can provide information or financial backing, while Nova Vigilance can offer straight-out muscle to help resolve situations. In a Teragen series, your characters can (and occasionally should) benefit from this protection. Remember, however, that the group or individual will expect the courtesy to be repaid. Ignoring this type of debt is a suicide gambit.

Possible favors vary from Terat to Terat. The following are examples of the most common types of aid available from prominent factions and members of the movement:

The Cult of Mal: Scripture supposedly talked Mal through his first Chrysalis decades ago, and many have found that he can lessen the trauma of the metamorphosis. The Cult of Mal can also offer Terats a safe haven during the process. In return, Scripture asks the individual to either join the Cult of Mal as an acolyte for a period of two months or to watch over somebody else undergoing the Chrysalis.

Of the two, the latter is far more dangerous. Scripture will not try to convert the Terat, merely open her eyes to the glory of Mal. The guard-duty option, however, entails protecting the person undergoing Chrysalis against his enemies. Scripture may even ask the Terat to keep watch over a personal adversary as a test of character. Those who fail earn his rarely seen (and unspeakably horrible) wrath, while those who succeed win his respect and future help.

The Casablanecas: Orzaiz treats all of his fellow Terats with a great degree of respect and regularly helps them with a variety of computer mischief (through Synapse) and as an information broker. Independently or in his role as leader of the Casablanecas, there is little that Orzaiz cannot accomplish with his vast resources. Of course, once a Terat uses one of Orzaiz's resources, she becomes one of his resources.

Orzaiz is not unfair, however; he will ask a Terat for favors commensurate to services rendered. He is fond of espionage and information-gathering missions, so the payment will often revolve around these themes. If Orzaiz cannot help a Terat, he wipes the debt-slate clean for that one instance.

Nova Vigilance: Nova Vigilance is the physical presence behind the Teragen, the ones not afraid to fight dirty and kill opponents in a brawl. With NV backing a Terat, there are very few fights they can't walk away from. Unfortunately, Geryon is a hard man to impress. The target has to be worthy of his attention. If Geryon is interested, he will help the Terat eliminate personal obstacles that require a less-than-subtle touch. The cost for this assistance, however is two-fold. First, the Terat who made the request must fight alongside Nova Vigilance to eliminate the target. They will not act as errand boys for spineless cowards. Second, Nova Vigilance can call upon the Terat at any time if they require his particular skills. There are no limits to how many times Geryon will exploit this favor.

The Primacy: Shrapnel, The Confederate and the rest of the Primacy are staunch advocates of self-empowerment. It is their duty to arm novas through training in combat and quantum manipulation; after all, what army would give a gun to a soldier who was not properly trained in its use?

While the Primacy appreciates the support of all novas who join the Teragen, they do not want soldiers who need constant saving. As such they offer new Terats combat training in a two- to three-week boot camp. This relentlessly rigorous program does offer several benefits, including an improved understanding of individual quantum manipulation, sharpening of combat skills, tutorials on how other powers work and a primer on the Teragen's most hated enemies. In exchange for these lessons, the Primacy will ask its graduates to help train or sponsor future recruits who match their power profile.

The Harvesters: Very few Terats ask favors of the Harvesters; nobody knows what they might ask in return. Harvesters are likely to help those with flagrant aberrations. In exchange for the sanctuary, circle of combat-worthy allies and close-knit "family" they provide, the Harvesters will expect a Terat to do the same for other Harvesters. The Harvesters can also provide a great deal of insight into aberration, but they demand unswerving loyalty in return.

Once a Terat asks for and receives help, he becomes kin. He cannot refuse another Harvester in need (within reason of course), and he must never leave a family member in danger. As Harvesters are fond of saying: "You scratch my back, and I'll clean your scales."

Of course the rules are different if the Terat seeking help is not visibly aberrant. In this case, the Harvesters, and especially Leviathan, are likely to ask for something odd in exchange. Giving in to their petty hatreds of "humans," they enjoy antagonizing pretty-boy Terats.

As such, return favors might include getting Latin sensation Alejandra to sign an autograph (dedicated to Leviathan and the Teragen, of course), performing a strip-tease for an assemblage of Harvesters (who then scream "ewwww, what the hell is that?" or "is skin supposed to be that color?") or robbing a fast-food restaurant for 50 chicken sandwiches, 30 cheeseburgers, 70 fries (maximize), a gallon of soft drink syrup and one salad.

Of course, the Harvesters' favorite game is Sewer Scavenger Hunt. They run this game when they have 10 or more participants (read: suckers).

The Pandaimonion: Many Terats discount the Pandaimonion as the Teragen's ongoing frat party. Those with sharper imaginations know the clique is a storehouse of street-level and black-market information and has a great deal of influence over certain media. They know which senator is hiding which prostitute in a fully furnished apartment, and they know when the next big shipment of smack is heading into the city. Chances are, they even hooked that senator up with his play-pal or are the ones pipelining the drugs. They can also get an important Terat an OpNet interview or a book signing with little more than a wink of a beautiful eye. The Pandaimonion is an excellent starting point for any street-level investigation. They are the Teragen's reputable scavengers, but few Terats are unbiased enough to realize it.

Unfortunately, Narcosis and the Pandaimonion are highly mercenary in their activities, especially when a Terat asks for their help. They will use their customer as a continued resource, asking a wide variety of favors, from acting as lookout on certain shipments to assisting in blackmailing an outsider. Any Terat who can persevere through the Pandaimonion's abuse earns herself a staunch ally and information resource. Anyone who rails against them or backs out of their deal is likely to be on the sharp end of a blackmail sting.

Sin-Eater: A Casablanca, Sin-Eater often acts as an informant and contact for Terats. Her unique ability to suppress aberrations is also available to Terats, although many consider such a desire for normalcy suspicious. Those Terats who do use her services must pay a heavy price, paying not only for her abilities but her subsequent discretion. She accepts money for the first part, but her silence can only be purchased in service. A client usually pays his debt by doing her bidding when and if she asks, but she also maintains a stable of talented individuals at her beck and call. They serve Sin-Eater for a year, collecting on neglected debts, protecting her from over-zealous heroes and offering her physical companionship on nights she gets bored. Highly dubious rumors abound that Raoul Orzaiz is indebted to Sin-Eater because of her services.



The Mathematician: The Mathematician is an odd bird. He mostly associates with Count Orzaiz and the less radical elements of the Teragen, which is to say, not many people. His advice can net an entrepreneur millions on the stock market or prevent future events from hurting a Terat. Unfortunately, Santiago is not liberal with his gifts. He knows that every time he affects the future, he changes a variable in his overall calculations. This is turn cascades into a series of errors that eventually affect advice he has given others. Mal and Orzaiz already receive his counsel, and he has little interest in helping anyone else. He will, on occasion, walk up to an individual and give some enigmatic advice about the future. Less perceptive Terats stupidly discount this as rambling and don't heed the cryptic warning.

Dubious Allies: The Portent

A nova can have no greater ally than the Teragen. The movement offers its friends a network of support, training, a compassionate ear, a helping hand and even a family structure often missing in nova life. The Teragen will exploit those novas as useful assets, but in the end, they earnestly seek to protect their kind against Utopia's darker agenda. However, Terats rarely offer this help to novas outside the movement unless they believe they can bring them into the fold. Helping out and doing favors for independent novas is part of the recruitment process. If a nova decides to stay independent, the Teragen treats them as a neutral party, with help and information doled out on a case by case basis.

The following individuals and groups all deal with independent novas. There is no universal Teragen code of conduct in these instances, though once a nova has received help from one group, the others know about it. This means a nova cannot abuse the Teragen's hospitality by going from group to group and eliciting favors. If you are running a non-Teragen series, these characters can open the world of the One Race to your players.

The Cult of Mal: The cult recruits and helps novas that operate within a religious framework. Between the Church of Eminent Escheaton, the Sunni-Sufi Islamic sects and the nova-inspired Kamisama Buddhist movement, Scripture and The Apostle have the contacts and resources to find those erupted acolytes seeking a balance between their spirituality and their powers. The cult offers the reward of Chrysalis to help define the balance of divinity within each individual. It is a potent selling point, especially to those who see Taint as ordained punishment for the sin of eruption.

Offering counseling and the promise of Chrysalis, the Cult of Mal has had the most success in indoctrinating new novas and keeping them loyal to the Teragen.

The Casablanicas: Orzaiz and the Casablanicas move within the financial quarter like spiders cleaning their

web. They can spot unusual market trends, such as those that hyper-intellectual novas cause when they dabble in big business, and they know how to approach these career-minded individuals.

Orzaiz, as the most visible and stylish member of the Teragen, offers a safe face for those put off by the organization's more violent members. He attracts those of high society, promising anonymity and a means of gaining both status and influence. Thanks to Synapse, Orzaiz can wipe away computer records of any wrongdoing, sponsor corporate black-ops missions and can even arrange access to dozens of off-shore accounts that governments can never touch. It is an attractive lure for nova-businessmen and scientists seeking "outside" funding for projects. Unlike the other cliques, the Casablanicas will cement alliances with novas wishing to remain independent. After all, independence has its advantages in the business world, and Orzaiz likes using all the advantages he can get.

Nova Vigilance: Nova Vigilance protects novas from the injustices of Utopia and world governments and will do so whether someone asks for its help or not. Of course, once it "volunteers" its services, NV likes to recruit the nova it helped. Those who choose independence will receive the occasional call or visit by a recruiter asking them if they have changed their minds. Those who report Nova Vigilance to Utopia promote themselves to the NV hit list.

The Primacy: The Primacy is much like Nova Vigilance. It helps those novas it thinks need help before approaching them. This method allows it to disprove its villainous public image.

The Harvesters: The Harvesters approach those afflicted with aberration and offer a secure support network and a means to stem Taint's damage. Unfortunately, the Harvesters will only help those who join the Teragen, and they will never help an untainted and unaffiliated nova. Those they help are Harvesters for life.

The Pandamonion: Narcosis only helps street-level novas or others she can control through vices. Again, the Pandamonion serves as an excellent street-level information broker and will sell intelligence for the right price in either trade or hard currency. For the most part, it does not actively recruit individuals, unless it believes the nova to be extremely talented. Instead, it uses its image to attract throngs of wannabes to it.

Sin-Eater: Sin-Eater's global network of clients and contacts places her in the best possible position to scout out new talent. She has the luxury to pick and choose recruits and often forces novas into helping the Teragen by allowing them to accumulate a large "Taint tab." If Sin-Eater decides not to recruit a nova, she will simply offer her services in exchange for cash, trade or services up-front.

Bounty: Although Bounty does not hold much sway within the Teragen, she is an interesting source of contact for many ecologically minded individuals. Her in-

volvement in various environmental groups makes her a superb liaison between "green" novas and the Teragen. Unfortunately, there is little Bounty can offer novas beyond her ties to the movement, because she will not assist in the fertilization of outsiders.

Deadly Enemies: The Monster

Caestus Pax, Skew, Lotus Infinite, Ricardo Montoya-Bernal and André Corbin are just a few of the novas who have earned the ire of the Teragen. Some earned this dubious honor because they have thwarted Teragen efforts, others simply because of what they represent; either way, they are Teragen enemies and are likely to be until the day they die. The Harvesters and Nova Vigilance will go out of their way to kill them, and the Primacy and the Casablanicas will sabotage their efforts. It does not matter that these actions earn the Teragen the mark of villain; a grudge is a grudge. It takes a great deal to get the Teragen to give up a fight, even if it is in their interest to do so — as Corbin is discovering.

If you are running a non-Teragen series, the movement can provide you with varied and deadly enemies. Possibilities include:

The Cult of Mal: Scripture will never actively encourage his acolytes to attack Terat enemies; neither will he stop them, however. This is remarkably dangerous because Cult of Mal novas are quite likely to risk their lives just to please the divine Mal and his consort Scripture. The Apostle, on the other hand, is not above commanding his thralls to attack and overwhelm his enemies, and he maintains his Four Horsemen for this very purpose.

The Casablanicas: Orzaiz and the Casablanicas leave the roughhousing to Nova Vigilance and the Harvesters. They recognize the fact that violence does serve a purpose, but they do not believe it should be too familiar a tool. Consequently, enemies of the Casablanicas are more likely to find their accounts drained, their credit ratings slashed and false arrest reports placed in the police archival system, rather than have their heads smashed about.

Nova Vigilance: Of course when Orzaiz's methods fail, there is always Nova Vigilance. Geryon not only attacks his enemies in public, he invites reporters to record his actions as a warning to other troublemakers.

The Primacy: The Primacy also engages in the crude art of violence, though it has refined its methods slightly. Terrorist acts like bombings, kidnappings and assassinations are all part of the Primacy's arsenal. So is joining Nova Vigilance for some hand-to-hand action.

The Harvesters: Leviathan knows when to fight and when to trap lone novas and ambush them. While Nova Vigilance is up-front about their actions, the Harvesters prefer stalking their prey. It is all about the hunt and frightening the victim into running panicked and wild. The Harvesters use fear to incite and violence to resolve.

Those unfortunate enough to have crossed this fac-

tion usually wake up from an ambush to find themselves in the heart of a regional sewer system. It then becomes a race to see if the victim can escape the sewer labyrinth and the Harvesters stalking him.

The Pandaimonion: Like Orzaiz, Narcosis prefers tact to violence. The Pandaimonion takes great pleasure in humiliating its enemies, whether privately or in public. Its tactics include addicting an enemy or an enemy's loved ones to drugs, arranging for reporters to catch the victim in very compromising situations and planting illegal evidence just as police arrive on the tail of a hot tip. Many novas have made the mistake of not giving the Pandaimonion enough credit, and it is this error in judgment that has landed them in jail or the tabloids.

One of the Pandaimonion's most successful ploys is to use a shapeshifter to seduce an enemy. Just when the couple is engaging in sex, the shapeshifter changes into a child or a barnyard animal. Seconds later, the press breaks in with flashbulbs popping. More than one southern senator affiliated with the American Eagle Party has been forced to resign from office in this way.

Sin-Eater: Sin-Eater uses her contacts and vast network of acquaintances to get even with enemies. Her reaction depends on what style of revenge she believes the situation warrants. She might send out a hit squad to eliminate the offending nova, or she might simply ruin their reputation. For the most part, Sin-Eater is very vindictive and prefers long, drawn-out punishments (preferably those that prove her superiority in the process). She occasionally uses her own powers to torture offending novas, keeping them in twisted agony for weeks at a time.

The Mathematician: Although Santiago is very cautious when it comes to his powers, his revenge plots are devastating. Using his abilities, The Mathematician can point Orzaiz and the Casablanicas in the proper direction. He knows where the target will be in the immediate future, and what would best ruin such things as personal finance, reputation and relationships. Using his clairvoyance, he relates any pertinent information that Orzaiz can use in the sting.

The Night of Long Knives: A Teragen Series

The Teragen is on the brink of a transformation from a loose coalition of novas drawn to *The Null Manifesto* into a more cohesive and focused revolutionary movement. This bloody transformation is practically unavoidable, but the specifics of the process are not set in stone. If you run a series focused on this change, your players' characters can and should play a major role in these events, *The Night of Long Knives*. This section helps show how they can.

What follows is not a complete write-up of a series. Instead it is an outline of the events to come, along with plenty of indications of how characters can get involved and what they can accomplish. This provides you with the rough skeleton of a series, without dictating just what your players will do. You can easily develop this framework into full stories once you know what kind of characters you are dealing with. You can also use *The Night of Long Knives* as a backdrop to a series of your own design, giving players the feeling that the Teragen is an evolving movement rather than a static group of "bad guys."

The Course of Events

The Future of the Teragen in Chapter One (pages 97-99) deals with the basic events that lie in the coming years. To summarize, after a bloody internal conflict occurring somewhere between 2009 and 2040, the Teragen becomes more focused and radical and pursues a more widespread brand of revolution. Divis Mal remains the father figure of the movement, although his exact position is not set in stone. Beyond these broad strokes, the details are up to you to determine, based on what makes a good story for your group of players. You can even rip apart these events if you wish, modify them or use them as background. While they will impact what is to come, you are not bound to follow them word for word.

In order to make the job of planning *The Night of Long Knives* easier, the following sections provide three possible courses for the events to come. Each one is designed to suit a type of playing style (action, spirituality or intrigue), but you can also pick and choose elements from each to make your own combination. Each of the three options provides several important milestones. These are key moments or currents within the overall conflict where the players' characters can affect the course of events. These snippets might intrigue your players enough to get their characters involved.

Option 1: The Bloodbath

Series Type: Action

Prominent Characters: Shrapnel and the Primacy, Leviathan and the Harvesters, Nova Vigilance, The Apostle.

If you want to run a high-action version of *The Night of Long Knives*, you can decide that the younger, more radical elements of the movement take the upper hand very quickly. In this option, Divis Mal sits back and watches his children fight it out to decide who will make the rules in their new nova society. The more conciliatory or cautious members eventually vanish, although the cost to the movement may be great. Important milestones include:

War of the Radicals

While revolutionary and radical groups like the Primacy, Nova Vigilance and the Harvesters cooperate early on in this option in order to eliminate their more cautious fellows, the differences between these groups are likely to explode into violence. Shrapnel and the Primacy

can face off against the Harvesters in many different ways, especially over control of key enclaves (like the Blackburn Hotel in New York) and through outright attacks. The tactics these radicals advocate using against external enemies (direct attack, terror, kidnapping, etc.) work just as well against internal opponents. The Confederate, who clings to his humanity, probably becomes a special (though dangerous) target for the Harvesters. Meanwhile, Nova Vigilance becomes little more than an elite strike force for the Primacy unless Geryon can garner some resourceful allies.

After a long period of internal strife, the sacrifice of The Apothecary and The Confederate could allow Leviathan and Shrapnel to create an uneasy alliance. The "political" Primacy and the "spiritual" Harvesters then become the key factions within a new, radicalized and more cohesive movement. Both The Apothecary and The Confederate might well survive to cause trouble later on, however.

Rise of the Vipers

This climate of unleashed violence suits The Apostle and Tank ibn'Mahmoud just fine. Manipulators and death-merchants both, they probably expand their respective power bases both within and without the movement and play the warring factions against one another. Most people are so busy dealing with the outbursts of violence, they hardly notice their subtle plans. The characters, however, might get involved in these plans and put a stop to them. Exposing either of these hidden dangers could create the bridge between the Primacy and the Harvesters. Resourceful characters might even manage to turn these two dangerous men against one another, perhaps by introducing the Cult of Mal to the Middle East.

Unless the players' characters stop them, however, both The Apostle and Tarik will thrive. The Apostle will never actually be able to eliminate Scripture and take his place as Mal's second, but he could cause a great deal of bloodshed by trying to get others to do so. Tarik will probably leave the Teragen, having secured the Middle East as his own, and carry several infected novas with him.

Death of the Weak

Those unprepared for a sudden move toward violence will not fare well in this option. The radicals will target almost all the elders, unless the players' characters can tip the scales. "Baseline-lovers" like Raoul Orzaiz and Narcosis become deceptively easy targets, while others will have to choose one side or the other. Sin-Eater becomes a Harvester unless something pulls her off that path. Those who try to deal with all sides are flirting with destruction. Whoever gains control of the Blackburn may eventually discover and destroy Synapse's body, while the radicals and spiritualists fight a bloody and pointless battle over Bounty's Nursery. Their zeal could kill off much of the next generation. Terats who somehow prevent this slaughter could rise to a prominent position, however.

The movement's elders are all likely to suffer dire fates (if not death, then banishment or ostracism at least).

The Apostle will use the violence as a cover to move against Scripture, while Bounty withers after the destruction of her Nursery. The Mathematician, seeing the devastation he had feared come true, knows the Aberrant War is coming and cannot take the strain of the future. In a dramatic moment, he lobotomizes himself to stop the flow of quantum through his node. The elders are not fools, however, and they could seek out the characters' cell to help them in the coming storm.

Taking it to the Streets

The move toward a violent revolution against baseline society takes place much faster in this option. Even while they are still settling scores with each other, the Primacy and the Harvesters start attacking Utopia and other enemies with virtual impunity. In fact, these attacks offer novas a way to prove their commitment to the cause and so become all the more frequent. Terats willing to go into the field for the cause could be catapulted to center stage of the conflict.

These acts of terror do not go unnoticed, however. Project Utopia scrambles for legitimacy, and dealing with the "Teragen threat" becomes a priority. Their plan is mostly based on pleasing the media and consists of sending T2M to hunt active Terats without dealing with the resources fueling the movement. The Directive also becomes involved, although it uses more effective underground methods. Players' characters could defend the movement against these attackers or even be agents fighting the Teragen.

Option 2: Chosen of Mal

Series Type: Spiritual

Prominent Characters: Divis Mal, Scripture, The Apostle, the Harvesters, Bounty

If you want to focus your series on the philosophies and spirituality of the Teragen, that can easily become the battleground of *The Night of Long Knives*. In this option, belief and dogma clash with egos, and commitment is more important than outright action. The movement's radicalization occurs in its very soul. Key milestones include:

The Fickle Godhead

Divis Mal fancies himself a god for the Nova Age, a tendency that both Scripture and The Apostle encourage. In this option, Mal becomes active in the affairs of his children, elevating the worthy and casting out the heretics. The Apostle sees Mal's dissatisfaction with the Pantheon as proof that Divis too now sees Scripture as imperfect and unworthy. The carnage that results should The Apostle actually attempt to kill Scripture would likely ignite Mal's wrath in earnest and leave several open seats on the Pantheon for ambitious Terats.

Mal pays little heed to allies and enemies and approaches Terats seemingly at random. Characters who garner such attention may find new motivation to undergo the Chrysalis or could uncover the spiritual rot at the core of the movement. Scripture may also seek to protect himself against a threat he only suspects, and he

could seek out the characters to infiltrate the Cult of Mal. If they fail, The Apostle launches his attack to assume a position of dominance over the Teragen as a whole, feeding the rage of Divis Mal.

The Way of Taint

Taint and Chrysalis are key issues in a spiritual series. Just how inhuman novas should (or can) be is more than an idle issue when dogma is the arena of conflict. The Harvesters lead this battle, pushing Terats to embrace their aberrations and abandon all forms of humanity. A mad rush into the Chrysalis might occur, with some casualties and many emergent monsters. Novas who cling to their humanity — Raoul Orzaiz, The Confederate, Narcosis — all become targets for recruitment or elimination. Inside the Harvesters, The Apothecary's own humanity probably casts him out of the movement he founded. Sin-Eater, on the other hand, likely joins the faction, embracing the Taint she peddles and becomes a savage creature of unmitigated malevolence. Only the Primacy is likely to stand firm, but their position still withers until their humanity seems like a throwback.

The players' characters, likely to be made up of young and largely human novas, make for prime recruits into this war of philosophy. They may also discover that egos play a greater role here than dogma. Embracing Taint seems to be more an issue of siding with Leviathan rather than one of actual philosophy. The players' characters might reverse this trend if they can bring The Apothecary, Leviathan and Sin-Eater together to form a more coherent dogma of monstrosity.

Suffer the Children

Wars of belief make victims of the innocent, and this one is no exception. The hidden Nursery in Africa, where Bounty oversees the clutch of Teragen children, becomes a battleground and a prize at the height of the strife. The purveyors of spirituality decide that to ensure the worthiness of the movement, they must indoctrinate the next generation. As soon as one faction, possibly the Cult of Mal, makes inroads with Bounty, the others swoop in to protect their own beliefs, and a deadly standoff ensues. At its climax, Sin-Eater might unleash aberration into the children to provoke their eruption — killing most in the process. Or The Apostle could inject them all with addictive narcotics, turning them into his slaves. The Primacy or another faction might even betray the Nursery to Utopia and watch it burn to ash. Bounty will die protecting her charges, and it is only after the slaughter is complete that the Teragen will realize what has been lost.

The characters have a chance to play a key role here. If they can prevent the slaughter, they could ensure the movement's prosperity and become heroes. Even by saving a few children (or Bounty herself), they can preserve some hope for the future.

There Are No Politics

In a spiritually centered series, politically minded Terats are largely out of the loop. Orzaiz, the Primacy, The Mathematician and Nova Vigilance all must scramble

to retain their position. Some individuals die as heretics, and some groups fracture because of dissent (like the Casablanças), but some others will stay to fight. The Primacy will survive a struggle for belief by adapting to the changing times, becoming a counter to the Harvesters' path of inhumanity. As in the first option, The Confederate likely ends up as a sacrificial lamb to ensure the Primacy's survival. The Mathematician becomes convinced that his own actions prevented him from seeing this radical spiritual conflict coming and so simply stops, refusing to give counsel to anyone, even Divis Mal, something that could unleash a volley of consequences.

Ambitious and skillful characters could help the political factions regain some strength. Helping Shrapnel to formulate and promulgate her beliefs in personal responsibility and the necessity of action could set up a counter to the inward-looking spiritualists. They might also help expose The Apostle's perfidy, giving his enemies a way to preserve their position.

Option 3: A Quiet of Screams

Series Type: Intrigue

Prominent Characters: Raoul Orzaiz and the Casablanças, Tarik ibn'Mahmoud, The Apostle, Turncoat, Sloppy Joe

If you prefer a series focused on intrigue, then the battle lines within the Teragen can blur significantly. Characters with their fingers in every pie like Synapse

and information merchants like Raoul Orzaiz come to center stage. The battles are just as bloody, but are hidden under a veil of cooperation and secrecy. All the Teragen's dirty little secrets are fair game in this option. Important milestones include:

There Is No Loyalty

In this option, individuals and their agendas rule the day, much more than any matters of dogma or factions. The various factions and cliques of the movement probably break down when individual members betray one another. The Primacy shatters when Shrapnel and The Confederate face off. The Harvesters break apart between The Apothecary and Leviathan. Even the Casablanças, supposedly masters of intrigue, rapidly succumb to personal infighting. Synapse could fall to the Cult of Mal, while Sin-Eater allies with Leviathan, leaving Raoul alone to deal with the web of intrigue that the movement has become. Only those factions that are already cults of personality — the Companions, the Cult of Mal — continue to thrive.

Players' characters bathe in this sea of betrayal. If they can play the game of information and influence, they quickly rise to an even keel with the Pantheon. If they stick together, they also have the power of a secure alliance, giving them a distinct advantage in an atmosphere of creeping paranoia. Of course, others will try to break apart their bonds. Characters who manage to put to-



gether a coalition among some influential Terats could well rise to the top rungs of the movement.

Sacrificial Lambs

Those not versed in the ways of intrigue make for prime victims in this option. Again, Scripture's fate is largely up to the players — unless their characters act to prevent it. The Apostle somehow eliminates and replaces him. More direct, action-oriented Terats like Geryon and Shrapnel are also unprepared for the endless betrayals of this version of The Night of Long Knives. The Confederate could replace Shrapnel as leader of the Primacy, getting them more and more involved in baseline politics. Orzaiz or another manipulative Terat might also use Geryon's sense of simple justice to lure him into a disastrous attack on Utopia. Bounty might also perish, her children having become prizes to be stolen and controlled. Only The Mathematician is sure to survive among the elders, because of his ability to see betrayals coming through probability waves. He does withdraw from the scene however, waiting decades for the right moment to act. Young Terats also die, possibly including Clarion and many Pandamonion, as patsies in the assassinations of elders.

Characters associated with any of these victims could well reverse the trend, at least as far as their ally is concerned. They might also uncover a plot to eliminate someone they have no real relationship with, which could give them power over both the target and the potential killers. They might also become the assassins themselves, perhaps only noticing once it is too late that they have been set up to take a fall. Suddenly at odds with the Teragen, they must uncover who is behind the frame-up while their former friends hunt them down.

Devil in the Sands

The schemes of Tarik ibn'Mahmoud essentially trump all other players in the game of intrigue. His quiet, subtle moves through the Teragen, seeding key individuals with deadly plagues, makes his final gambit devastating. If he isn't stopped, Tarik will secede from the movement, taking the Companions with him and leaving enough disease in his wake to prevent effective pursuit. Once he has a new position secured, he will activate his plagues to ensure his safety, killing off much of the Nursery and several of the Teragen's heavyweights, including Geryon.

Players do have a chance to stop Tarik. If their characters can piece together what he is doing, perhaps by uncovering the dormant disease flowing through the bloodstream of one of their own, they may be able to gather enough allies to destroy him. The Apothecary would be an especially useful ally. Of course, the atmosphere of distrust and betrayal prevalent in this option complicates both uncovering Tarik's agenda and gathering an effective coalition to oppose him. If the players' characters are Companions themselves, they could be torn between Tarik and the Teragen.

Outside Influences

Just like Utopia's current woes created an opportunity for its enemies, an explosion of intrigue within the Teragen opens it to infiltration and assault from the Di-

rective and Proteus. Turncoat still has a loyal Directive agent hidden somewhere in his fractured psyche, and if it emerges, it could give the Teragen's enemies an in. Sloppy Joe might also continue to act as Sophia Rousseau's eyes and ears in the movement (even as a player's character), and Proteus could also try to get some agents in. In the climate of betrayal, many Terats are willing to sell out their fellows, justifying it as purifying the movement. Eventually, the movement gains enough strength to repel its enemies, but this process takes some time, and the Teragen loses significant momentum. The Nursery and other enclaves might even become exposed to Utopia attacks.

Attentive players can piece together the fact that enemies have infiltrated the Teragen. Proof of this is explosive because it can either galvanize the movement or tear it apart. If the players' characters play their cards right, Terats will come together to repel the outsiders and ensure their mutual security. If the characters are less careful, they could simply add fuel to the fire, as various Terats blame each other for the infiltration. Players could also portray the infiltrators themselves, as is the case with Sloppy Joe.

Getting the Players Involved

Regardless of the course of events you choose to use in your version of The Night of Long Knives, the most important step is to decide just how your players' characters will get involved. While their characters do not need to be part of every blow in the conflict, they should be part of many key events. If not, the series won't be about them. There are several ways you can ensure that your players' characters become (and stay) involved in The Night of Long Knives, each of which can serve both as an overall incentive and as the basis for specific stories.

Patronage

The Teragen is organized something like a bickering family, and there are many "elder siblings" who seek out talented protégés, both to increase their own prestige and to pass on what they have learned. The philosophy of Teras and the Chrysalis process also encourage patronage because younger Terats seek out teachers and mentors in the philosophy. A well-placed mentor can serve as the players' characters main "in" with the Teragen Pantheon and provide a consistent way to keep them involved in the conflicts and intrigues of the movement. Their patron's fellows will pay attention to them and alternately try to recruit, cajole, befriend or destroy them. Possible patrons include almost any well-established Terat.

Possible Stories: The mentor requests that the players' characters accomplish a task that puts their loyalties to human friends and to the Teragen in conflict. Another Pantheon member tries to recruit the cell in exchange for power and resources. The patron dies (or vanishes) and the players' characters suddenly find themselves out of

the loop; can they discover who killed (or kidnapped) their ally? The players' characters uncover evidence that their patron has been setting them up as patsies for a move against a rival. Divis Mal approaches the players' characters and tells them they should be equal to their mentor.

Special Resources

The first part of *The Night of Long Knives* is a race to establish the best position for the coming conflict. A sure way to get the players' characters onto center stage is to provide them with some asset that many Terats will want to control. This asset can be as concrete as a popular enclave or as ephemeral as the favor of Divis Mal himself. Other good possibilities include a bit of dirt on another Terat (the secret of The Apostle's betrayal of Caroline Fong, for example), a good contact within Project Utopia (or the Aberrants, Directive, etc.) or a fan following among baselines and young novas. Of course, this resource can turn out to be more trouble than it's worth. Other Terats will covet it, and while some will court the team to gain access, others may try to steal or destroy it. By the time this happens, the players' characters will be fully embroiled in the conflicts within the movement.

Possible Stories: The team establishes an enclave (or another resource) in the Middle East, attracting the attention and ire of Tank ibn'Mahmoud. Divis Mal himself approaches the characters and discusses philosophy with them; soon enough, their prestige soars, and jealous Terats sharpen their knives. The players' characters discover a Utopian spy within the movement, but he claims to be a double agent, actually loyal to the Teragen. The players' characters learn of the location of Synapse's body; they can now blackmail the Terat hacker. One of the player's characters is pregnant and gains sudden prestige among the movement; Bounty asks her to leave the child in the Nursery, while Utopia hunts her down.

The Fate of a Friend

Aiding a friend or loved one in peril (or avenging a dead one) is a classic motivation in heroic tales, and it can work well in *The Night of Long Knives*. Players who watch as the conflicts within the movement destroy someone they care about may well dive headlong into the movement in order to get some justice. A friend could also suddenly betray them because of switching alliances within the Pantheon, which would send them on a quest to discover why and to make the back-stabber pay. This technique can also be used to good effect in series that don't start off within the Teragen. If a friendly character ends up dead because of a Terat, the characters could respond by trying to infiltrate the movement. Once inside, they begin to understand the movement's message, and their original mission becomes a little more complex.

This technique depends on establishing the victim character as an important figure in the players' minds. Ideally, you should have several stories with the character before he dies (or gets hurt, brainwashed or kidnapped) so that the players become attached.

Possible Stories: A friend comes into contact with the Cult of Mal, and her personality slowly shifts until she is a mesmerized zealot. After baseline extremists kill a friend, the players' characters cross paths with Geryon and Nova Vigilance, who assist them in seeking vengeance. A loved one is killed in a Primacy attack on a Utopia office; the Project offers characters the chance to infiltrate the Teragen, never letting on just how expendable they are until it is too late. After seeing several companions die in Kashmir, the characters meet Shrapnel who offers them a way out of the senseless killing. Scripture approaches the characters, who are shell-shocked elites (or other nova warriors), and offers them a more meditative path to emancipation; unfortunately he is killed or grievously wounded by an enemy during their training, and the players' characters must return to their violent ways to even the score.

Common Enemies

The Teragen is radicalizing, leading to greater and greater outbursts of violence. In this climate, the ability and willingness to go toe-to-toe with the enemies of the movement attracts attention. While some Terats (chiefly The Mathematician and Raoul Orzaiz) are somewhat dubious about the blatant use of violence, most are glad to see young Terats who aren't afraid to shed some blood for the cause. Even non-aligned novas that stand up to the baseline establishment and Utopia garner admiration and make for possible recruits. A team of characters that fits this bill might well face offers to join the Teragen or at least gain contacts within the movement. Those already part of the movement, even if they are poseurs, could enter the inner circle as capable soldiers. Several members of the Los Angeles faction of the Medellin cartel have made ties to the Teragen in just such a manner. Characters who rise into the movement in such a way may have a hard time shedding their martial image, however. The Teragen is about more than just "kicking ass," after all, and certain Pantheon members tend to look on Terat soldiers as a means to an end rather than truly liberated novas. Ingenious players can use this perception to their advantage, of course.

Possible Stories: The characters face off against T2M and manage to come out on top; Teragen members begin to court them. The characters, already Terats, end up in a violent scuffle with a bunch of Pandamonion poseurs, gaining prestige in the eyes of the Primacy but also attracting ire from Narcosis. After a nova is hurt or killed by angry baselines, the characters beat Nova Vigilance to the punch and exact some justice of their own; some Terats want to recruit them, but Geryon must first set his wounded pride aside. Nova gangsters, the characters become Terats because they stand up to the baselines, but their philosophical commitment is very weak; Tarik recognizes kindred spirits and seeks to either recruit or destroy them.

CHAPTER THREE: BENEATH THE MONSTER'S SKIN

More than any other group in *Aberrant*, the Teragen explores what it means to be a nova. Much of this searching is philosophical, but a good deal of it also comes down to quantum. Terats spend a lot of time trying to expand their powers, understand their own aberrations and refine their ability to control quantum. This chapter provides you with the game mechanics to deal with this exploration. The first section deals with the Chrysalis, which is the unique "quantum ability" of the Teragen. The chapter then provides you with new quantum powers (or modifications to existing ones) that reflect the Terats' constant drive to expand their abilities. Finally, we provide you with additional advice on creating a Teragen character.

Taint and Chrysalis

The Mazarin-Rashoud node is a ticking time bomb inside every nova's brain. It channels massive amounts of quantum energy that can warp a nova, transforming him into a mad and tainted god. Project Proteus is running scared of just what Taint means for the world at large. Many novas struggle against this internal plague, trying to keep aberrations and mental disorders at bay, trying desperately to hold on to their own humanity. The year 2008 is the height of the Nova Age, but even now, some of the erupted wonder if Taint hasn't damned them all.

Rumors are also flying that the Teragen knows how to deal with Taint. Those who like to be in the know whisper that even the most twisted aberrant monstrosity can be healed by Teragen medicines. This nova version of an urban legend comes close to the truth, but still misses the mark.

The Teragen Secret

The truth is that the Teragen does indeed have a way of "dealing" with Taint, but it does not have a cure. Instead, its members understand that Taint is not a malady, but a natural process, a by-product of their evolution into the One Race. Eruption is only the first step in the spontaneous development of a human into something more. Quantum energy continues to transform those who wield it, bringing them ever closer to their divine form. Terrified baselines and those novas who haven't accepted that they will never be human again call

this transformation aberration. For the Teragen, Taint is the catalyst of evolution, and glowing eyes, wings of fire and writhing tentacles are its signs. Nevertheless, they understand that Taint is a dangerous and potent force that can transform a Terat from a shining example of the One Race into a drooling and uncontrollable freak. The Teragen walks a fine line, reaping the potential of Taint while trying to avoid its downfalls. While some Terats successfully undertake their quest for evolution without being affected by Taint, others find themselves displaying aberrations as signs of their great becoming, further alienating them from baseline sensibilities.

Terats also respect Taint. They realize that their evolutionary process is extremely rapid and that it can easily go awry. The flow of quantum can and does create grotesque side effects in a body not fully ready to channel it. Those who fight against the course of Taint are doomed to lose all control over themselves, ultimately becoming self-destructive monsters or completely mad gods. In terms of the game system, this occurs when a character reaches 10 Permanent Taint. To prevent this, the Teragen use their philosophy of Teras and the Chrysalis to channel and control their evolution (and Taint).

Teras and Rashoud Facilities

On the surface, the ways of Teras and Utopia's Rashoud facilities seem to have the same purpose — to help novas control and understand their abilities. The difference lies in scope and application. Rashoud facilities integrate novas into baseline society and teach them to channel their powers and abilities for the "greater good." Stability and discipline replace individuality and raw potential (at least according to the Teragen).

Teras, on the other hand, embraces change and dynamism. It teaches novas to abandon their baseline core, seen as an obstacle to evolution, while providing direction and guidance. Without Teras, the Teragen's members would have no grounding force and run the risk of losing themselves in their evolutionary quest. Teras is the ultimate expression of a nova's individuality. Unlike the institutionalized Rashoud facilities, Teras allows novas the freedom to choose their own path and expand their powers as they see fit. There are no supervisors, no councilors, no adrenoclin and no Mox, only a mentor and fellow Terats willing and able to help a nova discover her true potential.

Channeling Taint: The Philosophy of Teras

The eruption of the M-R node gives a nova vast power over the world around them. Coursing quantum makes a nova's thoughts into reality in a blinding flash of raw potential. The Teragen philosophy of Teras is the ultimate expression of this Nova-Age phenomenon. Monks and yogis among the baseline population have long been able to control breathing, metabolism, heartbeat and other "involuntary" functions through meditation techniques. Likewise, the philosophy of Teras instructs the nova in, among other things, cognitive and meditative techniques that allow a nova adherent not only to determine how her Mazarin-Rashoud node channels quantum, but how efficiently her body manifests the power (and associated Taint) as well.

While Terats accept this philosophy, its specific effect on quantum evolution is a mystery, even to them. Those with a scientific background, like Altaz Zia, theorize that Teras grants a degree of subconscious control over the workings of the M-R node. Evidence for this type of unconscious manipulation of quantum already exists in the form of a nova's anima. Teragen thinkers argue that Teras merely augments this psychological influence on the M-R node. Other Terats such as Scripture and Marcel "The Apostle" Delonmier define Teras more spiritually, or even mystically, but all agree as to its effects and benefits. Teras allows a nova to direct how quantum flows through him and to determine, on a limited scale, how his body reacts to it, thereby allowing the Terat to mitigate or postpone some of the ill effects of Taint.

Teras, at this point, is neither foolproof nor perfect. While a Terat has more control over how he deals with Taint and can more easily avoid mental disorders, physical aberrations become more common as part of the trade-off. Teras lets a nova remain in control of himself for longer than other novas but the side effect is an increasingly freakish appearance. The Teragen recognizes this as a sign of evolution; baselines and other novas see it as the outward sign of degeneration and monstrosity.

Understanding Teras

Teras, at its core, is a form of self-discipline and mental conditioning. The members of the Teragen do not spend their days in contemplation, however. They force themselves to act in certain ways that challenge their preconceptions of what they are and, more importantly, of how they interact with the world around them. These novas relate to Teras through the Archetypes of Marvel, Monster and Portent. By following one of these models of behavior, the Terat forces her M-R node to develop in a specific direction, essentially toning and shaping it like a muscle. Given the extreme individuality of all Terats, even two novas following the tenets of the Marvel will differ in how they embody their Archetype, but the effects are the same: the ability to channel Taint into a productive force that helps them evolve.

Forcing Evolution: The Chrysalis

Novas who learn to study their own evolution — and their Taint — through Teras can control it to a limited degree. By embracing the natural body/mind changes, they can stave off madness and eventually unleash even greater quantum potential. This manifests as a period of metamorphosis as potent as the eruption itself; Terats call this the Chrysalis because those who undergo it exude a quantum husk around their comatose forms. Like a nova's anima, each cocoon is unique, representing the nova and the changes taking place within. During the Chrysalis, quantum potential is very high, and the body restructures itself in many ways to better handle it. Many marvelous effects ensue, often including a growth in the M-R node, a broadening of various quantum abilities and physical transformations.

Getting to the Chrysalis is a lengthy process of self-mastery, with the Teras philosophy as a guide. Each nova is unique, so each must study herself and her own evolution before entering the Chrysalis. By embracing the path of Marvel, Monster or Portent, the Terat gains direction and purpose. Doing so helps her focus and allows her to better understand the transformation of her body and mind.

Inducing a Chrysalis is more than adhering to a simple philosophy, however. It helps to have a guide who has undergone a Chrysalis, though some Terats have been able to push themselves into the process through devout adherence to the philosophy of Teras. Although the Terat must understand who and what she is as a nova, she must also push herself to the limit. In short, the Terat must force herself to take that brave evolutionary step forward into the unknown. The result is a massive influx of quantum similar in potency to eruption, the difference being that the nova is, to a limited extent, in control and can channel these energies to affect changes in mind and body.

Even so, the Chrysalis is not an easy process. Beyond the fact that it is very possible to fail to transform, even a successful metamorphosis has its price. The nova sacrifices a good portion of her identity as a baseline and her sense of self. The more the Terat embraces her essence as a nova through the Chrysalis, the more alien and inhuman she becomes. The quantum energies restructure the brain and body, and the nova emerges with an altered outlook. To enter the Chrysalis is to sacrifice one's self to the course of evolution, and many Terats shy away from it for this very reason.

New Traits

Teragen characters have two Traits that other **Aberrant** characters do not: Archetype and Chrysalis. These are related to their quest to understand the course of Taint within themselves, what they call evolution. Although central to the movement, Teragen characters do not have to have these Traits. Poseurs and other young Terats who haven't yet embarked on a

study of their own evolution will not have an Archetype or a score in Chrysalis.

It is possible, though extremely unlikely, for characters outside of the Teragen to have these Traits. Characters fleeing from the movement or who have found some independent route to Teras could have them, but you should be wary of granting non-Teragen characters access to these Traits. Teragen members embrace Teras and Chrysalis but also respect the fact that doing so makes them inhuman and dangerous. Non-Teragen characters who take a Teras Archetype and undergo the Chrysalis simply to avoid Taint are not only missing the point but could imbalance and ruin series. Consider this a warning.

Archetype

Teras, the Teragen philosophy, says that all novas contain the aspects of Marvel, Monster and Portent. In order to understand their own evolution, Terats focus on one of these aspects, and that focus determines some of the course of their future transformation. Archetype becomes the path Terats embark on in their journey of self-exploration and discovery. Some believe that Archetype is a matter of pure choice, others that it reflects a deeper truth about the nova — a core even more profound than the psychology represented by Nature. Either way, players should choose their characters' Archetype either during character creation or when they join the Teragen.

Although Archetype defines a Terat's status as a nova, it should not be used to limit what a character can or cannot do. The Archetype is a guideline, expressing how the character relates to the philosophy of Teras (in terms of setting) and how his progress down the road of evolution is represented in game terms. The player should take a moment or two to think how his character embodies this Archetype and what it means to him.

As Storyteller, use these Archetypes as tools to guide your players through the philosophy of Teras. Treat each character and her Archetype as unique. While this can seem daunting, it is not. The key is to be consistent and open-minded.

Below are the three Teras Archetypes, plus notes and suggestions on how to make use of them in terms of Taint channeling, sample powers and how to induce Chrysalis.

Marvel

You are transforming into a living God, with the grandeur and followers to prove it. You may have come from baseline humanity, but now you walk above it, ready either to lead the way to glory or destroy the monkeys in cleansing fire. As a Marvel you inspire and challenge the preconceptions of others; you readily tear down the old to make way for the new. This is a brave new age; novas are the shining stars of the world and some must shine brighter and longer than others — this is what you are.



A Word of Caution

Storytellers should be wary of allowing players to channel Taint into Chrysalis too often. Taint and quantum are mysterious elements, and you should reflect this in your games. Transforming Taint into Chrysalis is a remarkable act of faith and self-discipline; it means that at some level the nova has gained a better understanding of, and possibly some control over, her own evolution. If you are too lenient as a Storyteller, the whole process loses its impact and becomes nothing more than a simple game mechanic (and an easily abused one). Only allow a character to enter Chrysalis in moments of great stress or as a result of a profound epiphany in regard to her powers or status as a Terat. Remember, keeping the story and action moving is more important than justifying why you let a character channel Taint or not. Divis Mal himself erupted nearly a century ago and has undergone the Chrysalis only four times. Unless a series has been going on for a very long time, no player's character should undergo the Chrysalis more than once, and even that could be the culmination of an entire series.

Players have the same responsibility. If you ask to channel Taint every time your character acquires Taint, you are only abusing the system. As a player, use your Archetype and Eruption as guideposts. A Mega-Intelligent Marvel might not be able to channel Taint when using his Quantum Blast, but might if using Telepathy or Domination.

You never shy away from a challenge; nothing is impossible for you. In short, you are potential given shape. Those who understand will flock to you; those who do not are lost and worthless. They should be pitied or destroyed.

Social Attributes, superiority and pride are your keystones.

Typical Marvel Powers: Marvels prefer flashy powers that allow them to showcase their abilities as novae and gods. Mega-Attributes are good choices because they represent the ultimate in evolutionary perfection. Chiseled physiques and inhuman strength have their benefits, but Marvels are social creatures and prefer Social Mega-Attributes, especially those that allow them control over others. Particular powers include Empathic Manipulation, Disrupt, Domination and Hypnosis.

The Marvel is a trendsetter, a fearless explorer and a trailblazer. As such he also often manifests powers like Flight, Hypermovement and Teleport.

Aberrations and Taint: Marvels routinely push themselves to the limit, wanting to prove their superiority over others. Anytime a Marvel gains Taint after using his powers in a flashy or unnecessary way, he may try to convert it into points of Chrysalis. While Power Strain is the most common way, it is not enough merely to push one's power to the limit — the Marvel must make a spectacle of the action, asserting both his power and pride.

Aberrations common to Marvels include Colored Skin, Glow, Unearthly Beauty, Permanent Power, Second Self and Megalomania. Mental Disorders such as Delusions and Obsessive/Compulsive Disorder are also appropriate.

Entering Chrysalis: To enter Chrysalis, the Marvel must challenge the impossible and prove he is the master of his own body and abilities. This can manifest in countless ways, but the action must pose a level of risk to the nova, and the resulting Chrysalis usually allows the Terat to manifest a power corresponding to the threat involved. A Terat with control over heat might not trigger a Chrysalis by entering the core of a raging fire but might if he were to expose himself to the cold vacuum of space.

Monster

You have turned your back on pretty humanity and embraced the darkness within. You wear your evolution on your sleeve, shedding all ties to your baseline heritage. You are stronger, faster and better than the monkeys and are ready to prove it to them. More so than other Terats, you embrace the fact that you are no longer human — but something other. Let them call you a monster, beast or freak; it doesn't matter. You are beyond that.

This does not mean you indulge in pointlessly freakish or feral behavior for the sake of it. There is no evolution in becoming a mindless beast — only devolution — and this is blasphemous for the One Race. The key is to maintain control over the monstrous impulses in you and unleash them in a directed manner in appropriate circumstances. Your power stems from the knowledge that you are more than human, that you no longer need your baseline coil as a security blanket. You are free. Long live the new flesh.

Physical Attributes, instinct and endurance are your keystones.

Typical Monster Powers: All Monsters revel in their inhumanity, whether it manifests physically or mentally. Dominance and strength are important to them, and most (though not all) have at least a few dots in Physical Mega-Attributes. Powers such as Armor, Body Modification, Invulnerability and Bodymorph are common, but so are Quantum Vampire and Leech, Elemental Anima and Mastery and Molecular Manipulation. Bulging biceps and horns do not define Monsters; how and why they use their powers do.

Aberrations and Taint: Monsters are commonly riddled with Taint and aberrations as a direct result of abandoning their baseline natures and embracing the changes brought about by excessive quantum manipulation. Understanding and converting this Taint is not as easy for Monsters as it might seem. It requires intense concentration and will, a deliberate effort to channel and control their monstrous impulses. A Monster cannot achieve the necessary self-discipline to channel Taint into Chrysalis if he is enraged or under stress. This means that any Taint gained in a combat or similar situation cannot be transformed. For a Monster to channel Taint requires a certain ritualistic element such as sacrifices or ritual scarification. The key is in premeditation: The Monster must act, not react. Likewise, causing fear in others, thereby proclaiming one's inhumanity, is another way to channel Chrysalis.

Any physical aberration is well suited for a Monster, as are mental disorders such as Delusions and Po-

lar/Bipolar Disorder. Most Monsters eventually manifest Hormonal Imbalance (Rage).

Entering Chrysalis: To remain in control of their impulses, Monsters must break ties with their baseline roots and, more importantly, confront their baseline failings. To induce a Chrysalis, Monsters must face their own fears and weaknesses, especially those remaining from their human selves. They must prove they are beyond baseline morality through both word and deed. The result is usually a violent and cruel act, such as killing an old lover or enemy. Vengeance is a recurring motif.

Portent

The future is here, and you are it. Your mind and body are evolving exponentially, and you will leave baselines behind you before long (if you haven't already). You do not consider yourself perfect, but the flaws of others are so much more obvious now. As a Portent, you understand yourself and your own potential like few others, and you draw your strength and conviction from this. Introspective and insightful, you prefer to unlock the inner mysteries rather than professing to the world the virtues or horrors of being Terat.

As a Portent, you are the ultimate pioneer, an intrepid soul driven to explore and uncover truths others would rather ignore. No one plays devil's advocate as willingly or as well as you. Past, present and future are fluid to you, not linear in progression but dynamic and alive.

Mental Attributes, spirituality and will are your keystones.

Typical Portent Powers: Contemplative and wise, Portents concern themselves with omens and knowledge. Their insight is unnerving, almost inhuman. Portents prefer Mega-Intelligence and Mega-Perception over other Mega-Attributes. Their powers revolve around their quest to understand and enlighten. While Marvels are guides in the journey of evolution, Portents light the path for their fellow Terats. Powers such as Intuition, Luck, Premonition, Disorient, Entropy Control, ESP, Telepathy and Temporal Manipulation are all common, but more so than other Terats, no two Portents are alike. Each is a herald of his or her own destiny.

Aberrations and Taint: Experimenting and understanding their own powers allows Portents to channel Taint. Portents are cold and analytical. They routinely use their own bodies and powers as guinea pigs to test their limits and unlock the mysteries of their own M-R nodes. Any time a Portent gains Taint from trying to understand something beyond her current knowledge — what a perennial enemy's next move will be, how to construct a particularly devastating weapon, why a serial killer chooses children as his victims, etc. — she can try to gain Chrysalis.

Typical aberrations include Aberrant Eyes, Anima Banner, Feeding Requirement, Unearthly Beauty. Common mental disorders include Delusions, Multiple Personality Disorder and Schizophrenia.

Entering Chrysalis: To make the evolutionary leap into the Chrysalis, Portents must be ready and willing to embrace the unknown. To trigger the transformation, they

must put aside the slow analysis that characterizes them and jump blindly into a situation that they do not understand. A highly controlled nova might use drugs to build up a devastating rage, while a complete city slicker might challenge herself to survive in the Sahara for weeks on end. These leaps can resemble vision quests or harrowing nightmares, but always involve elements of danger.

Chrysalis

The Chrysalis Trait represents the evolutionary power of quantum in a nova's body and mind. When a nova uses one of the Archetypes of the Teras philosophy to shape her actions, she can slowly affect her subconscious use of quantum. This can eventually trigger a second eruption, called the Chrysalis. When she encounters a situation in which she would normally gain temporary Taint as a result of actions in line with her Archetype, she can spend quantum to gain Chrysalis instead. It costs seven quantum points to convert one point of temporary Taint into one point of temporary Chrysalis in this manner. The Storyteller judges whether the situation is in line with the character's Archetype, using the guidelines provided under the Archetype descriptions above. The first few times a character does this, she will also need to be under the tutelage of a mentor (see sidebar).

For Example: Phil's character is a detective Terat named Bridgett Caulder. She has the Portent Archetype and a Terat Mentor. While investigating the murder of a young nova, Bridgett and some fellow Terats corner the killer. The others are going to kill the murderer, but Bridgett absolutely wants to understand his motives and so uses Telepathy to probe his mind. She has relatively little time, however, so she decides to push her power to gain extra successes. She spends two quantum points to activate the power and one point of Willpower and three quantum points to max it out. She concentrates, rolls three dice and gets 1, 3 and 5: a botch. A quantum backlash inundates Bridgett's brain, and she should gain a point of temporary Taint. The Storyteller judges, however, that her effort to understand the killer's motives are in line with her Portent Archetype. Phil spends 7 more quantum points, and Bridgett gains a point of temporary Chrysalis instead of Taint.

Like Taint, Chrysalis has permanent and temporary forms. When a nova gains 10 points of temporary Chrysalis, she gains one point of permanent Chrysalis. Her temporary Chrysalis is then reset. Also, like Taint, Chrysalis causes a nova to become increasingly inhuman. She becomes alienated from baselines and displays strange aberrations. For these purposes, treat permanent Chrysalis just like permanent Taint. A nova gains an aberration for each point of Chrysalis after the third and suffers a +1 difficulty when dealing socially with baselines once she reaches Chrysalis 4 and for every two points thereafter. The only difference, is that the player instead of the Storyteller chooses which aberration results from Chrysalis. If permanent Chrysalis ever reaches 10, the

character is removed from play because she exudes a quantum cocoon from which she will not emerge during the time frame of the game; alternatively, the Storyteller can proceed as though the character botched while entering Chrysalis (see page 123).

Social penalties from Chrysalis are *cumulative* with those from Taint, so a nova with Chrysalis 4 and Taint 4 suffers a +2 difficulty on social roles with baselines.

For Example: It is later in the series and Bridgett already has Taint 5. The Storyteller has imposed a +1 difficulty for social interaction with baselines and the Aberrant Eyes and Feeding Requirement (fear "eaten" telepathically) aberrations. Now, Bridgett has just gained her fourth point in Chrysalis. She gains another +1 difficulty for dealing with baselines (for a total difficulty of +2) and another aberration. This time, however, Phil chooses the aberration and decides on Anima Banner. Whenever Bridgett uses her mental powers, her target's secrets and fears will play out around her.

The most important effect of dots in the Chrysalis Trait, however, is the ability to enter the Chrysalis itself. This is a transformation in which the nova channels massive amounts of quantum into herself to trigger a second eruption. This process is explained below.

Because points of Chrysalis are essentially points of Taint filtered through the nova's Archetype, this Trait gives Terats the potential to survive much more Taint than other novas. While Teragen members still become unplayable at 10 permanent Taint, it takes them much longer to get there. They do suffer more aberrations because of the effects of Chrysalis, however.

Players cannot start play with points of permanent Chrysalis. They must earn them during play.

Undergoing the Chrysalis

The actual transformation known as the Chrysalis occurs when a Terat has sufficiently altered her worldview to affect her subconscious use of quantum. She can then channel large amounts of energy back through her M-R node, causing a series of radical changes to her own physiology and quantum abilities. This process is slower and more deliberate than the eruption because the Terat slowly releases the stored quantum from her Node during a prolonged meditative — even coma-like — state. The Teragen thinks of this as a new evolutionary leap. Just as with her eruption, triggering this process requires the nova to subject herself to stress. The nature of the stress required depends on the character's Archetype (see pages 118-120 for suggestions).

A side effect of the Chrysalis is the creation of a quantum husk around the nova. This cocoon can take almost any shape and reflects the nova's use of quantum. A Terat whose powers revolve around fire may be wrapped in cold flame, while one whose powers are mental may grow a sheath of images drawn from his mind and that of others.

Mentors and Chrysalis

It is very difficult for a nova to arrive at the philosophy and self-control techniques of Teras entirely on her own. A mentor of some sort will have to teach her the basics and show her what patterns of behavior will help her live up to her chosen Archetype. Young Terats need to undergo a period of tutorship in order to gain some insight into their own transformation. This apprenticeship can be quite short, but it still forms an important bond between the various individuals of the One Race. The nature of the relationship varies from case to case. Some mentors are harsh taskmasters, others friendly "elder siblings."

In game terms, a nova without a permanent point of Chrysalis needs to learn from a mentor if she is to gain temporary points of Chrysalis. The mentor will teach the young Terat what behaviors are appropriate to her Archetype and ways in which she should be tearing down her human perspective. Though it certainly helps, the student does not have to be in the mentor's presence when gaining temporary Chrysalis, but she does need to regularly spend time studying with her mentor (a few hours a week at least).

Once a character has even a single permanent point of Chrysalis, the mentor is no longer necessary — nova evolution is a personal journey. The teacher-student bond often outlasts its overt usefulness however; as students can learn many other things from their mentors.

A suitable mentor must have at least two dots of permanent Chrysalis and the same Archetype as his student. The student must have the Mentor Background (the number of dots depends on the importance of the teacher).

Players who have their novas undergo the Chrysalis should describe just how their cocoon appears.

During the course of the transformations, the player exchanges her character's permanent Chrysalis points for triple that number of experience points (e.g., five points in Chrysalis become 15 experience points which she can spend on character improvement).

Once the transformations are complete, the nova emerges from her trance. She will have new or expanded abilities. She may also have gained a better control of her psyche, although she will have grown notably more distant from baseline humans. For some, the cost is too great, but most Terats embrace this evolution wholeheartedly.

Mechanics

A player can choose to have his nova enter the Chrysalis at any point after her permanent Chrysalis Trait reaches five. At this point, the nova has undergone sufficient transformations that she can trigger the process with an appropriate stress.

When the nova exposes himself to the stressful situation, she spends 10 quantum points and rolls her permanent Chrysalis against a +2 difficulty. A botch indicates a catastrophic failure in which the character goes into the Chrysalis but cannot come out or some other

equally devastating circumstance (see sidebar below). A failure means the Chrysalis fails; all Chrysalis points are lost, and the character gains a point of *permanent* Taint. Success means the Chrysalis works and the character undergoes the transformation outlined below.

The quantum cocoon and coma-like state of the Chrysalis overtake the nova almost immediately, although she can spend extra quantum to delay its onset at the rate of one hour per point. Terats often do this to reach an enclave where they can undergo the Chrysalis in relative safety. When delaying a Chrysalis, a nova is groggy and sluggish. She cannot regenerate quantum, and all actions suffer a +3 difficulty — actions more complex than getting from point A to point B are generally doomed to failure.

As soon as the nova triggers the Chrysalis, she cannot regenerate quantum until she emerges because she is spending her energy transforming herself. As soon as her quantum cocoon forms, the character can do absolutely nothing except heal injuries, and she is totally unresponsive to external stimuli, even direct attack. The increased flow of quantum through her transforming body, however, protects it. The nova gains the Adaptability and Regeneration enhancements of Mega-Stamina (see *Aberrant*, pp. 160 and 161) for the duration of the Chrysalis. If she does not have Mega-Stamina, she may still heal one health level per turn with Regeneration, and

Adaptability works as normal. She must still spend quantum to use Regeneration, however, so repeated attacks will kill her before she realizes it.

The basic duration of a Chrysalis is a number of weeks equal to the experience points the player's character spends while in the Chrysalis (see Spending Experience Points on the next page). Players with a character in a Chrysalis should play another character for a few games. Each Chrysalis is unique, so you should feel free to adjust the time frame to suit your stories. You can also have the nova experience complex visions, relive traumatic moments or undergo anything else you wish.

For Example: After many stories and a great deal of effort, Phil has brought Bridgett to the point of entering Chrysalis. Her relevant Traits are currently Quantum 5, Node 1, Chrysalis 6 and Taint 5 (plus one temporary point). Phil has pooled 7 experience points. During a one-on-one session, Bridgett seeks out a traumatic event to trigger her Chrysalis and chooses to use Telepathy to rearrange her own mind into that of a psychopath. That night, she stalks and kills her baseline parents. When she comes to and realizes what she has done, she suffers great mental stress. Phil spends 10 Quantum, rolls 6 dice and gets 2, 4, 7, 7, 8 and 10, for a total of four successes. This exceeds the +2 difficulty, so the Chrysalis is successful. Bridgett slips into a coma-like state and a silvery sheath covers her. Those who look into the sheath see their own fears reflected back at them.



Botches

If a character botches her attempt to enter the Chrysalis, you have several options. You can rule that the character remains stuck in her cocoon and have the player make a new character. This may cause hard feelings with the player, however, and makes for an anti-climactic end to a story of personal evolution. A better solution is to ask the player to use another character temporarily and build a story around dealing with the consequences of the botched Chrysalis. Perhaps the rest of the player cell will have to find someone with mental powers that will allow them to enter their friend's subconscious to wake her.

Another option is to have the Chrysalis succeed but impose a mental transformation on the character. This could manifest as a mental aberration such as Megalomania or one of the Hormonal Imbalances, a change of Archetype or both. This occurred to Shrapnel, the leader of the Primacy (see page 43). This type of transformation only works well if the player is willing to go along with it, however, so you should both discuss this option first.

Basic Effects of the Chrysalis

A successful Chrysalis causes a transformation of the nova's ability to manipulate quantum and can cause radical physical and mental changes as well. Special expenditures of experience points represent most of these changes (see below).

In terms of the game system, the character's permanent and temporary Chrysalis go down to zero when she translates Chrysalis to experience points. *She retains both the aberrations and the social penalties gained from the Chrysalis Trait, however.* Although the Chrysalis can stave off the madness of Taint, it does not make it easier for a nova to deal with baselines. The nova can spend experience points to alter mental aberrations (see below).

For Example: With Chrysalis 6 and Taint 5, Bridgett suffers a total +3 penalty on social rolls involving baselines (+2 from Chrysalis, +1 from Taint). She also has five aberrations (3 from Chrysalis, 2 from Taint). When she emerges from her metamorphosis, her Chrysalis Trait will be reset to zero, but her social penalty and number of aberrations will remain the same. Her 6 points of permanent Chrysalis points become 18 experience points; combined with the experience she pooled before entering the Chrysalis, Phil has 25 experience points to spend to show how Bridgett has grown as a nova due to her transformation.

Spending Experience Points

The main benefit of the Chrysalis is a significant enhancement in a nova's ability to manipulate quantum. In game terms, the player trades points of Chrysalis in for experience points, which he can spend in several unique or especially efficient ways, allowing him to transform his character. Undergoing the Chrysalis grants only a minimal number of experience points, however, so the player will want to pool experience before entering to optimize the efficiency of the Chrysalis.

The player can spend experience points in the following ways (see table on page 125 for a summary of costs):

Reduce Taint (1 or 10 points)

When a nova undergoes the Chrysalis, the player can spend experience points to reduce temporary or permanent Taint, and this is the only way in which to reduce permanent Taint. A reduction of Taint represents the Terat's greater subconscious control of his quantum abilities, which allows him to stave off the madness that occurs at 10 permanent Taint. Eliminating a point of temporary Taint costs one experience point, while eliminating a dot of permanent Taint costs 10 experience points. Reducing Taint does *not* eliminate aberrations or reduce the social penalty for dealing with baselines, however. Terats can stave off madness, but they remain alienated from baseline humanity.

For Example: Phil decides he can't afford to reduce Bridgett's permanent Taint and that it is still manageable. He does spend one experience point to bring her temporary Taint down to zero, however. Even if he had reduced her permanent Taint, it would not have affected her aberrations or social penalty. Phil has 24 experience points left to spend.

Alter Mental Aberrations (5 points)

Terats tend to accumulate a lot of aberrations, something they do not see as inherently bad. Mental aberrations can be very destructive, however, preventing a Terat from interacting even with his evolutionary peers. The Chrysalis allows Terats to suppress these dangerous aberrations at the cost of other physical transformations.

The player can spend five experience points to replace a mental aberration with a physical one of the same or higher level. Several aberrations can be altered in this way.

For Example: Bridgett has the Obsessive/Compulsive mental disorder and Phil decides to spend seven points to make into a physical aberration. He chooses Hardened Skin, an outside sign that Bridgett is becoming unemotional and distant (like many Portents). Her flesh is now a white, chalky substance. Phil has 17 points left to spend.

Increase Quantum Control (variable cost)

The Chrysalis allows a player to spend accumulated experience points to gain or increase various Traits tied to the direct manipulation of quantum energy. The build-up to the Chrysalis allowed the Terat to slowly alter her own behavior and outlook (in line with her Archetype) and unleash better quantum control by letting go of human fear and restraint. Less concerned about losing track of herself, the nova allows quantum to flow more freely through her node and body.

The player may spend experience points on the traits below at the reduced costs listed on page 125. The player may purchase several dots at once, although he must pay the cost of each dot. The character must still meet any required Quantum minimums and gains any associated Taint. Players cannot purchase tainted Traits during the Chrysalis.

- The Quantum Trait
- Quantum Pool
- The Attunement, Dormancy or Node Backgrounds
- Quantum-related powers (see box)

For Example: Phil wants Bridgett to use quantum a little more efficiently, so he decides that the Chrysalis will enlarge her node. She has Node 1, and he raises that to Node 2 for one point. He has 16 points left to spend.

Quantum-Related Powers

Name	Page
Aberration Transfer	p. 125
Chimeric Aberration	p. 126
Disrupt	Aberrant Rulebook , p. 190
Node Spark	p. 127
Nova Proxy	p. 128
Quantum Conversion	Aberrant Rulebook , p. 217
Quantum Imprint	Aberrant Rulebook , p. 218
Quantum Leech	Aberrant Rulebook , p. 218
Quantum Regeneration	Aberrant Rulebook , p. 219
Quantum Vampire	Aberrant Rulebook , p. 219

Expand Appropriate Powers and Mega-Attributes (variable cost)

Teras alter and expand their subconscious use of quantum by embracing one of the three Archetypes of Teras — Marvel, Monster or Portent — and the Chrysalis helps them expand quantum abilities tied to that Archetype. Because a Marvel has shaped her own psyche with a behavior pattern of inspiration and leadership, the transformation of the Chrysalis is likely to give her abilities to better inspire and lead. Similarly, a Portent will become even more wilful and analytical and a Monster more destructive and active. Individuals may also develop new powers (or expand existing ones) that reflect their new self-image as reflected in their aberrations. A nova with fiery wings may develop Flight or Elemental Anima (Fire), for example, because they go in line with his image of himself as an angel of wrath. This process is not unique to the Chrysalis, but it occurs more efficiently there.

The player may spend experience points on powers and Mega-Attributes that are either tied to his character's Archetype or outgrowths of his character's aberrations. The Archetype descriptions on pages 118 to 120 provide a basic list of powers and Mega-Attributes appropriate to the three Archetypes. The Storyteller can judge that other powers are appropriate, however, based on how the player has his character use them. Empathic Manipulation is not generally tied to the Monster Archetype, for example, but if a nova uses it only (or mostly) to project fear or revulsion, it becomes appropriate.

For Example: Bridgett has the Portent Archetype so investigative powers and those tied to Intelligence and Perception are most appropriate. Phil decides to raise her Telepathy, which the Storyteller agrees is fitting. Phil raises it from 3 to 4 for nine experience points. He has seven points left to spend.

The Storyteller is the final arbiter of whether a power is tied to an aberration or not (and so appropriate for increase). For existing powers, the litmus test is whether the aberration appears as an uncontrolled manifestation of the power. A power affected by the high-level aberration Permanent Power (see **Aberrant Rulebook**, p. 153) certainly qualifies, but many others do as well. A character with a Quantum Bolt eye-blasts and glowing Aberrant Eyes qualifies, as does one with Armor and Hardened Skin or Force Field and Glow.

For Example: Bridgett also has the Psychic Shield power. Phil says that power is tied to her Anima Banner (which manifests psychic images). The Storyteller agrees, and Phil raises Psychic Shield from 2 to 3 for four experience points. He has three points left to spend.

For new powers, the litmus test is whether the aberration could conceivably grant a new power. The Storyteller can impose a maximum in the number of dots the player can purchase during the Chrysalis — any further dots would have to be purchased during play at the regular cost. The possibilities are nearly limitless. Aberrant Eyes might develop into Mega-Appearance (maximum 2 dots) or Hypnotism; Glow or Energy Emission into Force Field or Immolate; Twisted Limbs or Oozing Skin into a Body Modification; Second Self into Clone or Homunculus. In no case should the new power eliminate the aberration, however — that a Terat can now send the twin growing out of his chest to run errands does not make its presence any less disturbing.

For Example: Phil asks whether Bridgett's new Hardened Skin aberration could give her some physical protection. The Storyteller agrees that a suitable power could derive from the aberration, but warns that it isn't very close to the Portent Archetype or Phil's character concept. Phil and the Storyteller reach a compromise: Phil can purchase the Armor power for Bridgett, but only one dot. Phil does so for three points. He has no more points. Because Phil has spent 25 experience points, Bridgett's Chrysalis lasts for 25 weeks.

If a power falls within the limitations above, the experience point costs of these powers, Extras, Mega-Attributes and enhancements is that listed on the next page. Players can buy multiple dots at once, but must pay the full cost for each. They must still meet any Quantum minima. Players cannot purchase tainted Traits during the Chrysalis.

Storytelling Changes

The game mechanics above cover the most obvious changes that occur during the Chrysalis, but it's up to you as Storyteller to make the players feel the transformation. The Chrysalis is not just a case of a character learning new powers; it is a major change. The nova has now become like the Archetype she follows. You need to drive this home during play.

Physically, you can feel free to slightly tweak the special effects or aberrations of a character. A quantum bolt may now be a swirling mass of annihilating energy, more terrifying than before. Aberrant Eyes that were once simply an odd color may now flare with energy when the nova

Chrysalis Experience Points Costs

Trait Change	Cost
Taint (temporary)	1 per point removed
Taint (permanent)	10 per point removed
Aberration	5 per mental aberration transformed
Background (Attunement, Dormancy and Node only)	current rating
Mega-Attribute*	current rating x 3
Quantum Power (Level 1)*	current rating x 2
Quantum Power (Level 2)*	current rating x 3
Quantum Power (Level 3)*	current rating x 5
Quantum	current rating x 4
Quantum Pool	2 per dot
New Trait	Cost
Background (Attunement, Dormancy and Node only)	1
Enhancement*	3
Mega-Attribute*	3
Quantum Power (Level 1)*	2
Quantum Power (Level 2)*	3
Quantum Power (Level 3)*	5
New Extra for existing Quantum Power*	one-half (round up) of the difference between total normal cost with and without the Extra (see <i>Aberrant</i> , p. 230)

*Only Mega-Attributes (and their enhancements) and powers (and their Extras) tied to a character's Archetype or aberrations, or quantum-related powers can benefit from this reduced cost. Otherwise, use the costs on page 124 of *Aberrant*.

becomes excited or enraged. You can work with the player on these changes or spring them on him during play.

It is more difficult to impose mental and social changes on a player. Telling him that his nova is now haughtier or more lustful (without imposing an outright aberration) is delicate. A much better solution is to vary your description of the world and the reactions of other characters, especially baselines, to the nova. Describe baselines as somewhat alien and their behavior as childish, animalistic and slightly inscrutable.

For example, the player's nova could return to a favorite haunt — a gambling den open to novas. The baseline dealer suddenly seems on edge as the character sits down, practically throwing the cards at the nova. The dealer's breath seems sour, and he never makes eye contact. Another nova gambler seems as jovial as ever, but the baseline next to him is sweating and fidgeting, as if primed for flight.

The character may need to spend most of her time with other novas at this point. Philosophically, this is not a problem for Terats, but you can feel free to make players notice the price of the transformation.

After the Chrysalis

Once a nova has gone through the Chrysalis, she re-enters play as usual. Within the Teragen she will be referred to as "elevated." (The term "elevated" is synonymous with the second stage of nova development.) In terms of game

mechanics, the character now reembarks on the slow road to the next Chrysalis. She gains temporary and permanent Chrysalis just as before, but her track is reset to zero (she also has no need of a Mentor). Her Taint may have been reduced, though probably not by a drastic amount.

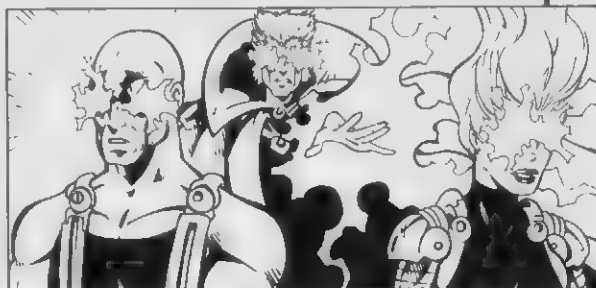
Remember that the total social penalty from Taint and Chrysalis remains the same as before the Chrysalis, even though the Traits may be reduced. When the nova's permanent Chrysalis again gets to 4, this penalty begins to rise even more. Similarly, if the nova gains more permanent Taint, it will also rise. The nova will also gain new aberrations under these conditions. Pretty soon it will be very difficult indeed for the Terat to be around baselines — such is the price of evolution.

For Example: After the Chrysalis, Bridgett has Taint 5 and Chrysalis 0. She still suffers a +3 difficulty on social roles with baselines and has five aberrations, however. If she gets to Taint 6, the penalty will go to +4 and she will gain another aberration. If she then gets to Chrysalis 4, the penalty will go up to +5 and she will gain a seventh aberration.

New Quantum Powers

Though quantum offers potentially boundless power, many novas hold back on exploring the limits of their powers because they fear gaining Taint and aberrations. This is not the case for the Teragen. Terats constantly push the envelope of quantum evolution, developing many unique abilities along the way. Several of these grant them special control over quantum itself.

This section contains information on a series of new Teragen powers. It is easy to forget, however, that powers should not be a list of "toys" to purchase and use. They are guidelines to finding singular abilities for your character. All novas are unique, and Terats more so than others.



Aberration Transfer

Level: 2

Quantum Minimum: 3

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Aberration Transfer

Range: Touch

Area: N/A

Duration: Maintenance

Effect: The nova forces aberrations onto an opponent for a brief period.

Multiple Actions: Yes

Description: Aberration Transfer is a perfect example of the Teragen's evolved understanding of quantum and Taint. The nova can use his own aberrations as a weapon, forcing his limitations upon others. Some Terats exercise this ability to relieve themselves of their quantum-derived burdens, while others employ this as a method of censoring or blackmailing public novas.

To use this power, the nova spends one quantum point for low-level aberrations, two points for medium-level aberrations and three points for high-level aberrations; he must then touch the victim. The attacker then rolls Manipulation + Aberration Transfer against the target's Willpower. Success means the attacker has transferred one of his drawbacks to his victim. The aberration lasts for (Quantum + Aberration Transfer) turns, after which time the attacker must pay an additional cost equal to his original quantum point expenditure or lose the transfer.

This power is usable against both novas and baselines, though baselines suffer one level of lethal damage for each level of aberration inflicted upon them. During this time, a nova with Aberration Transfer is free from the aberration's physical effects. Sin-Eater possesses this power.

Extras: Permanency (Quantum Minimum: 5. Player can permanently transfer aberrations to a baseline or to another nova at a cost of 10 quantum points for low-level aberrations, 20 quantum points for medium-level aberrations, and 30 quantum points for high-level aberrations. This will not work on any target sharing the nova's quantum signature, including Clones and Homunculi. Note: Terats who use this power simply to rid themselves of aberrations are considered overly invested in their baseline image of themselves, and the Harvesters may pay the character a visit....)

with Aberration Transfer (increasing their repertoire of weapons) and Shapeshift (imitating novas down to their aberrations). This power enables a nova to alter his aberrations, changing them from one type to another. The nova can turn a severe aberration into several minor ones temporarily or alter a couple of medium ones into one greater aberration.

To use this power, the nova must roll Stamina + Chimeric Aberration. Each low-level aberration requires one success to change. Medium-level aberrations require two successes, while high-level ones require four successes. This means, for example, that changing one low-level aberration into another low-level one requires only a single success. The same applies when swapping aberrations of medium (two successes) and high level (four successes).

When interchanging aberrations of different levels, either the highest success requirement of the two levels applies, or the successes function as an exchange value. In the first instance, a nova wishes to change a low-level aberration into a high-level aberration; the player would need four successes in order to succeed (using the highest requirement of the two values). In the second instance, the nova wants to change a high-level aberration into several low-level aberrations, he must choose four low-level aberrations (equal to the high-level success requirement) to substitute for the high-level aberration. The same would apply for medium-level aberrations, which would require two successes to change from low to medium.

A nova can never change an already altered aberration. That means he cannot take an original low-level aberration, change it into a high-level one, and then change that into two medium-level aberrations. He must revert back to his original aberration before he can turn it into something else. Geryon has this ability.

Extras: None



Chimeric Aberration

Level: 2

Quantum Minimum: 3

Dice Pool: Stamina + Chimeric Aberration

Range: Self

Area: N/A

Duration: Maintenance

Effect: A nova with this power can change his own aberrations. In essence he is an aberration shapeshifter.

Multiple Actions: Yes

Description: Initially believed to be a minor variant of Shapeshift, Chimeric Aberration has since proven a versatile power in its own right, especially when possessed by those



Deflect/Redirect

Level: 1

Quantum Minimum: 1

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Deflect/Redirect

Range: Touch

Area: N/A

Duration: Instant

Effect: By spending quantum, the nova can deflect various ranged attacks and, with skill, redirect them.

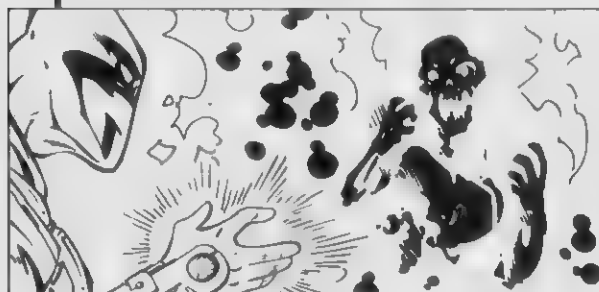
Multiple Actions: Yes

Description: By spending a point of quantum, the nova can deflect incoming ranged attacks. This is a standard

power block defensive maneuver (see **Aberrant**, p. 243) usable against Quantum Bolts, Elemental Blasts, other ranged energy attacks and missile weapons (including bullets). If the nova using this power has two or more net successes, she can redirect the attack at her opponent or another target in range. To redirect, the number of net successes become successes in a notional attack roll. However, the redirect cannot have more successes than the original attack. Use the same damage as the initial attack.

To use this power, the nova must be aware that the attack is coming, and the attack must be visible. (With attacks like bullets and forms of energy beyond the visible spectrum, one must first be able to perceive them, using Mega-Perception or power effects.) Deflect/Redirect does not work against powers with explosive or area effects or against mental powers (like Mind Blast or Telekinesis).

Extras: Catch (will trap the incoming attack on a net success and can then be fired as per Redirect in a subsequent turn. Holding the attack for more than a turn costs two quantum points per extra turn).



Disimmunize

Level: 2

Quantum Minimum: 3

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Disimmunize

Range: Touch

Area: N/A

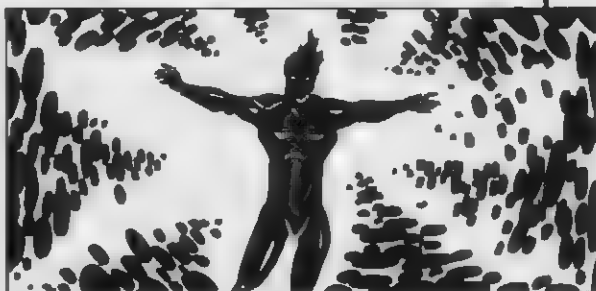
Duration: Maintenance

Effect: The attacker strips away part of the target's personal immunity to her own damaging power.

Multiple Actions: Yes

Description: The opposite of Quantum Forgery (see below), Disimmunize allows a nova to disable a target's power immunity makeup. A fire-wielding nova becomes vulnerable to her own heat blasts, for example. The attacker rolls Intelligence + Disimmunize, resisted by the target's Willpower. Each net success indicates a point of damage that will "get through" the next time the target uses her power. The successes can never add more damage than the target has in her power's dice pool. Furthermore, botching an attack while under Disimmunize causes a point of temporary Taint.

Extras: None



Node Spark

Level: 3

Quantum Minimum: 5

Dice Pool: Quantum + Node Spark

Range: Self

Area: N/A

Duration: Variable

Effect: The nova can force a power to grow or evolve. The new power fades at the rate of one dice pool point per (Node Spark) turns.

Multiple Actions: No

Description: Node Spark sends a surge of quantum through the M-R node to ignite instant, albeit temporary, evolution. This mini-Chrysalis affects Mega-Attributes and powers alike, taking them to the next logical level. As always, the Storyteller has final say on how a power evolves.

To use this ability, the nova spends one turn concentrating, three quantum points and rolls Quantum + Node Spark. Each success can become an enhancement for an existing Mega-Attribute, an Extra for an existing quantum power or a dot in a new Mega-Attribute (no enhancements) or quantum power (no Extras). New Mega-Attributes or powers must be outgrowths of existing quantum abilities (Immolate would be appropriate for a character with Bioluminescence, for example). The power fades at the rate of one success per (Node Spark) turns. Successes allocated to new powers fade first, then new Mega-Attributes, then Extras, then enhancements.

Unfortunately, forcing evolution always has consequences. Every 1 rolled on the Node Spark attempt turns into a point of temporary Taint. If the nova botches the roll completely, then the nova gains temporary Taint equal to his entire dice pool that *cannot* be converted into Chrysalis. Leviathan has this power.

Extras: None



Nova Proxy

Level: 2

Quantum Minimum: 3

Dice Pool: Quantum + Nova Proxy

Range: Touch

Area: N/A

Duration: Fades at the rate of one dice pool point per (Quantum + power rating) hours.

Effect: The nova bestows one of his powers upon a host at a strength of one die per success, up to the novas own level in said power.

Multiple Actions: No

Description: With Nova Proxy, a nova can "lend" his power to a nova or baseline. The process takes five turns to complete for another nova or 10 turns for a baseline, after which each success translates as one die of power transferred to its new host. The giver loses the same amount of dice from his own pool, regaining it slowly as the proxy loses one die per (Quantum + power rating) hours.

The process is relatively straightforward when dealing with another nova, who uses the new power by drawing from her own quantum pool. Each time she botches while using her new gift, however, the proxy gains a point of temporary Taint — much like the adverse effects of power strain.

Things are more complex and unhealthy when using a baseline. The nova must spend twice the normal quantum to endow the proxy and needs to spend further points to grant her a Quantum Pool with which to power her new gift. Charging a baseline costs two quantum points for every point the baseline receives. Once the power fades, the baseline also suffers dangerous effects. For every dot of power and point of quantum she stored, she suffers two points of bashing damage (which can be soaked with Stamina). If this damage ever incapacitates the character, she gains a low-level aberration. If the baseline proxy ever botches, coruscating quantum energy surges through her system, inflicting two levels of aggravated damage from internal burns.

Extras: SurrogatePool (the proxy can draw directly from the nova's quantum pool as long as the two are touching)

Quantum Forgery

Level: 2

Quantum Minimum: 3

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Quantum Forgery

Range: N/A

Area: N/A

Duration: Maintenance

Effect: After a turn of studying a foe, a nova can alter his quantum signature to mirror that of his opponent's, thereby gaining protection from her attacks.

Multiple Actions: Yes

Description: Novas are immune to their own offensive effects. Quantum Forgery allows a nova to alter part of his power makeup to mirror an opponent's immunities. To use Quantum Forgery, a nova must study an active target for a turn (he must see at least one power in use) and roll Intelligence + Quantum Forgery to match his quantum physiology with that of the opponent. Each success provides 3 extra soak against a particular attack as long as the nova maintains mimicry. The nova can only protect himself against an attack he knows the opponent possesses or has seen in use. He must also roll separately for each different attack he wishes to affect, though subsequent attempts do not take an extra turn of study.

This power does not provide immunity against attacks that do not use a specific medium or type of energy (like Quantum Blast or Immolate); it grants no protection against attacks such as Mega-Strength blows or being hit by telekinetically hurled projectiles.

Extras: Total Forgery (in one roll, the nova can gain immunity to all applicable powers from a single nova opponent).



Spatial Manipulation

Level: 3

Quantum Minimum: 5

Dice Pool: Variable

Range: Variable

Area: Variable

Duration: Variable

Effect: Character can manipulate space.

Multiple Actions: Yes

Description: Although novas have already exhibited spatially related powers such as Teleport and Warp, novas with Spatial Manipulation are rare. Those few, however, control one of the principle foundations of reality itself. With casual effort, they can widen or shorten the gap between two points, create micro-pockets of space and alter perception of distance. Some believe that novas of this ilk are capable of much more, like traveling the breadth of galaxies, but no known nova of this magnitude has manifested yet.

Like Elemental Anima and Mastery, Spatial Manipulation incorporates a number of techniques in its use. Each can be purchased at a cost of one technique per dot in Spatial Manipulation. Techniques not yet mastered, however, cost double the quantum points and require a difficulty penalty of one to use. The following list does not include Teleport or Warp, though the Storyteller might consider them available techniques.

Askew

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Spatial Manipulation

Range: (Quantum + power rating) x 5 meters

Area: N/A

Duration: Maintenance

The nova can alter a target's spatial acuity, attacking his immediate senses (hearing, sight and touch). This affects the target's ability to hit, his coordination and perception. The nova must roll Manipulation + Spatial Manipulation against the target's Willpower. Each success reduces the target's Dexterity or Perception Trait by one. If the Dexterity Trait hits 0, then the target drops to the ground and is unable to stand or fly. If Perception hits 0, then the target is forced to close his eyes to deal with the nauseating sensation of a skewed world (see *Strobe*, *Aberrant*, p. 223, for guidelines as to the effects).

Flatform

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Spatial Manipulation

Range: Self

Area: N/A

Duration: Maintenance

The Flatform ability enables the nova to turn two-dimensional or flat like a sheet of paper. This allows the nova to slip under doors, evade attacks and conceal himself more easily. The character does not lose any density or mass with this power; his spatial manifestation in the third-dimension is merely displaced. In this form, the nova gains +1 dice to Stealth and Dodge Skill totals for every dot in Spatial Manipulation, provided she's edgeways to her opponent.

Ripple Shield

Dice Pool: Wits + Spatial Manipulation

Range: Self

Area: N/A

Duration: Maintenance

Unlike a standard Force Field that absorbs damage from incoming attacks, Ripple Shield enables the nova to warp reality around himself, altering the trajectory of attacks. This serves as both partial deflection and partial absorption of damage. To determine how much damage is absorbed or redirected, the nova rolls Stamina + Spatial Manipulation. Each success translates as +4 to soak against bashing and lethal damage. To redirect against a target in range, half the successes (round down) become successes in a notional attack roll. Ripple Shield applies solely against missile and ranged energy attacks, not against melee and hand-to-hand attacks.

Spatial Shock Wave

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Spatial Manipulation

Range: Special, see below

Area: (Quantum + power rating) x 10 meter radius

Duration: Instant

This raw manifestation of Spatial Manipulation is a shock wave originating from the nova. It throws space into turmoil for a microsecond by contracting it tightly around the nova, then snapping it back like a rubber band. This creates a spatial distortion that fans out in a blast radius. Both friend and foe within range are susceptible to the effects of this attack. Spatial Shock Wave inflicts [Quantum x 2] levels + (power rating x 3) dice of bashing damage.

A variant of this attack allows the nova to focus the spatial distortion into a tight series of needle-like blasts. This delivers [Quantum x 2] levels + (power rating x 2) dice of lethal damage to a single target at a range of (Quantum + power rating) x 15 meters.



Warp Body

Dice Pool: Wits + Spatial Manipulation

Range: Self

Area: N/A

Duration: Maintenance

Warp Body allows a nova to become a twisting, rubbery, spiraling mass just by manipulating the three-dimensional physics of his body. Although the process looks like extreme stretching and pliancy (not to mention horribly painful), the nova feels no discomfort. In this manner, the nova can evade attacks more easily — since dodging is now a matter of mental agility rather than physical restrictions — and he can slip out of grapples more readily.

Characters with this technique active automatically gain the Flexibility enhancement (*Aberrant*, p. 159). When fighting, the character may add the successes from Wits + Spatial Manipulation to his Dodge/Grapple pool. Furthermore, at the Storyteller's discretion, this power may make escaping from shackles, squeezing through tight spaces and stretching to reach items at a distance much easier, reducing the standard difficulty of such actions by up to 3.

Addenda to Existing Powers

The following list of techniques and abilities expands upon the power frameworks already established in *Aberrant*. Some represent increased understanding of existing powers while others simply reflect the abilities of specific Terats.

Body Modification

Here are additional possibilities for Body Modification (see *Aberrant*, p. 184):

- **Nematocysts:** (three nova points/six experience points) These tiny surface cells are armed with barbed micro-stingers and toxin sacs. When the nova brushes against a target, the stingers hook into exposed skin and inject their toxin. The stingers are not strong enough to pierce a Force Field, Armor or toughened skin, but clothing can still carry the stingers until they are either washed away or touched by exposed flesh. Whenever the character executes, or is the target of, an attack involving flesh-on-flesh contact, the other character suffers a Stun Attack (see *Aberrant*, p. 223) using the nova wielder's Dexterity dice. This does not lessen the effect of the actual hand-to-hand attack. The toxin is rarely potent enough to deliver bashing or lethal damage. Leviathan has this Body Modification.

- **Slimy Skin:** (two points/four experience points) The nova produces a coat of slime or lubricant to either protect her skin from the elements or to facilitate movement. It gives him 4 extra dice when eluding clinches, tackles and holds, and 2 additional soak against fire-related attacks. Leviathan has this Body Modification.

Bodymorph

Here is an additional possibility for Bodymorph (see *Aberrant*, p. 185):

- **Shadow:** Scientists have a difficult time categorizing this form of Bodymorph. They can identify it neither as gaseous nor energy, for novas in "shadowform" defy standard classifications. Characters composed of "shadow" exist in an eerie two-dimensional world where most solid substances melt like hot caramel. Shadowforms automatically have at least one dot of Density Control (Decrease) and Invisibility (only in shadows or darkness). After that, shadow-based novas have exhibited a varied field of effects including a searing cold touch, cloning, Platform, use of the Asphyxiation combat maneuver (see *Aberrant Rulebook*, p. 246) and the ability to grow claws and other natural weaponry. Blinker, who also teleports, has this power.

Elemental Mastery

Here is an additional Elemental Mastery technique (see *Aberrant*, p. 194):

Suffocate

Dice Pool: Wits + Elemental Mastery

Range: (Quantum + power rating) x 10 meters

Area: N/A

Duration: Concentration

This nasty ability allows the character to suffocate opponents by either filling their lungs with sand, smoke or water or by creating a vacuum of air. The nova surrounds the target with elemental micro-particles (except if the mastered element is air, in which case the nova can shunt it away), forcing him to breath in the air-borne particulate. These elemental motes rapidly coat and block the bronchioles and alveoli passages, making it difficult to concentrate and breath.

To use Suffocate, the player rolls Wits + Elemental Mastery resisted by the target's Stamina. Each net success reduces all of the target's dice pools by one. Once any dice pool reaches half-strength, the target is unable to use that power/ability unless he spends one Willpower to ignore the effects. Additionally, while Suffocate remains active, the target can only remain conscious a number of turns equal to his Stamina. Each point of Mega-Stamina increases the duration by an additional two turns. After that he falls unconscious and starts taking one level of bashing damage per turn.

This power does not work on anyone possessing the Mega-Stamina enhancement Adaptability, a life support system or a self-contained environment (scuba gear, biohazard suit or mechanical armor). This does work against novas employing a Force Field because, unless specified otherwise, this defensive measure still allows air to pass through it.

Entropy Control

Teragen exploration into the nature of quantum has led to the development of this new Entropy Control technique (see *Aberrant*, p. 196):

Quantum Poltergeist

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Entropy Control

Range: Special, see below

Area: (Quantum + power rating) x 5 meters

Duration: Maintenance

This wild power creates a quantum chaos field around the nova, weakening various attributes and powers. Each success on Intelligence + Entropy affects the dice pools of random nova targets within the Quantum Poltergeist field, be they friend or foe. The effects vary according to the amount of successes, though the Storyteller distributes the number of successes evenly throughout the affected area. That is, no one target can receive the full brunt of the attack unless he is the only nova in the poltergeist field.

In order of priority, the powers affected are the target's main abilities, then their last power used and finally the current power in use. The target, however, can spend one Willpower to negate the effects of the field.

Quantum Poltergeist Effects

Effect	Success Requirement per Target
Attacks lose one die.	One success per die
Stun and bashing defenses lose one soak	One success per soak
Movement pools lose one die	One success per die
Generic Level 1 powers lose one die or dot	One success per die or dot
Lethal defenses lose one soak	Two successes per soak
Generic Level 2 powers lose one die or dot	Two successes per die or dot
Mega-Attributes lose one dot	Two successes per dot
Generic Level 3 powers lose one die or dot	Three successes per die or dot
Mega-Enhancements lose one die	Three successes per die
Mastery and Control (excluding Density Control) level powers lose one die from the overall dice pool	Four successes per die or dot

Should a person's dice pool with one power reach half-strength, he can no longer use that gift unless he spends a point of Willpower

Temporal Manipulation

These two new techniques exemplify how Terats are expanding their understanding of their abilities (see *Aberrant*, p. 226, for Temporal Manipulation):

Delayed Blow

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Temporal Manipulation

Range: Touch

Area: N/A

Duration: Instant

With Delayed Blow, a nova can offset the effects of hand-to-hand and melee attacks so that an opponent feels the damage later. When employing this attack, the player must first succeed in a standard Ability contest (if the attack is opposed). While damage and soak is determined immediately, the attacker may then roll Intelligence + Temporal Manipulation against the target's Stamina to determine the damage delay. Each success offsets the attack effect by one turn.

Delay Damage

Dice Pool: Stamina + Temporal Manipulation

Range: Self

Area: N/A

Duration: Maintenance

Akin to Delayed Blow, a nova can offset the effects of damage on himself. When rolling Stamina + Temporal Manipulation, each success becomes two effective levels of "soak" that the nova can temporarily ignore from the next attack. The damage is not gone, however, merely offset. After a number of turns equal to the net successes, the damage and its effects manifest fully. This includes incapacitation and death blows.

New Extras

The following are new Extras complimenting those already listed in *Aberrant*. The Primacy researched and developed these Extras to increase their repertoire. Since then, their secrets have spread to other Terats.

Delayed

This Extra enables a nova to delay the effects of certain powers, essentially booby-trapping areas by creating a time bomb. Once the nova unleashes a power in tandem with Delayed, the power effect becomes dormant for five minutes per die in the nova's relevant dice pool. The nova can decrease the time it takes the power to manifest down to the second, but he can never increase it beyond his dice pool limitation. The time-delay must be made at the time the nova activates his power.

When this Extra's duration expires, the power suddenly manifests where placed. Blasts strike out along their trajectory (down corridors or against support beams, for example), illusions spring to life, and entropy effects manifest.

Trigger

Experts on the Teragen believe this is an advanced form of Delayed and, potentially, one of the Primacy's greatest tools. Like Delayed, a nova can activate and forestall an effect, but in this case, the power is waiting for somebody to activate it. This is the Extra equivalent of creating mines.

Trigger must be tied into an object which houses the quantum from the power effect. When somebody disturbs the object, the power effect manifests along the same lines as Delayed.

Recruits and Initiates: Making a Terat Character

The mechanics for creating a Terat character are no different than those for a typical *Aberrant* character. In approach, however, their differences become apparent — Terats are unlike other novas out there. This section highlights these differences as they impact character creation.

Before you start, keep in mind that the Teragen has a diverse membership, tied together by the fires of evolution and revolution. Just like no two novas are alike, each a unique expression of quantum potential, no two Terats are carbon copies. It also pays to break away from stereotypes — not all Terats are drooling bruisers.

Finally, remember that the Teragen operates in cells. While on the surface, little distinguishes a character team from a cell, deeper down the difference becomes apparent. The cell is the characters' new nova family. Unable to

return to their baseline lives — at least in the open — the characters' cellmates are the only real allies and compatriots they have. In a world where only one individual in a million is a nova, the importance of the cell cannot be overestimated. Only the characters' cellmates understand the pain and anger of being the One Race. Keep this bond in mind when creating a character.

Genesis of a Monster

Regardless of what Terats may want to believe, before their eruption, they were baselines. The temptation exists to gloss over baseline creation and focus on the nova side of things, but doing so robs your character of depth and soul. Yes, your character is a Terat now, but her past as a baseline colors her existence as a nova revolutionary.

Step One: Concept

A critical phase of character creation, answering "who were you?" grounds your character and begins the transformation from a collection of dots into a real character. Take a moment to think of your character's past. More importantly, ask yourself what started your character's spiral into the Teragen. Alienation, rebellion and injustice are three possible catalysts behind the movement, and if you can work them into your character concept (or Nature), you begin to answer the most important question that defines a Marvel, Portent or Monster — why?

For Example: Lucien is creating a character for a conspiracy-based Teragen series run by Joshua. In the spirit of this theme of alienation, Lucien decides he wants to play a quiet and reclusive character named Dean Johnson who finds power and voice within the Teragen. Lucien chooses the Nobody concept and picks Bureaucrat as Dean's Nature, fitting choices for a faceless office worker who slaves away doing mindless data-entry.

Step Two: Choosing Attributes

Next up, choose your character's Attributes as normal. Decide what your primary, secondary and tertiary categories are and allocate dots (7/5/3). You might want to think about whether your character has any weakness or failings and reflect them in his stats — maybe he's uncoordinated or socially awkward. Such failings could serve to further alienate the character or become the mark of imperfection that eruption erases (or does it?).

For Example: Dean was just another face, he never made close friends and spent most of his time alone, so Lucien sets Social as the tertiary category (Charisma, Manipulation and Appearance all at 2). Physical comes second, while a reclusé and a loner, Dean is in relatively good shape. Lucien decides that Dean worked out at a gym, trying to fit in (Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3). Dean's forte is his analytical mind and perception, so Mental gets top billing (Intelligence 4, Perception 3, Wits 3).

Step Three: Choosing Abilities

Time to define what your Terat can do and what she knows. Remember to try and stay focused. Just be-

cause you can assign dots to Martial Arts doesn't mean it makes sense to do so or that you have to. Think of your character's concept first and dice pools second.

For Example: Jotting down the automatic 3 dots in Endurance and Resistance, Lucien chooses Dean's Abilities keeping his concept in mind. He allocates three dots in Awareness, Bureaucracy, Intrusion and Stealth (Dean is the perfect "fly on the wall"), two in Athletics, Computer, Investigation, Subterfuge and Streetwise and one in Brawl.

Step Four: Backgrounds

Roleplaying "stats," Backgrounds help nail down the intangibles of your character. Is that secretary your character knows at the UN an ally or a contact? Does your character have any pull among the Teragen? Terat characters will likely have ratings, even if low, in quantum-related Backgrounds like Attunement, Dormancy and Node. Those who wish to study the philosophy of Teras and reach the Chrysalis will also need a rating of at least 2 in Mentor (see sidebar, p. 121).

For Example: To Dean, being a nova elevated him from his dreary existence, so Lucien picks Backgrounds that show Dean's interest in "evolving." As an information gatherer and broker, Dean has Cipher and Node at two, and Mentor at three. He sees his teacher as domineering (if helpful), but lets the Storyteller come up with the details to fit the series.

Teragen and Dormancy

The Teragen is a nova-supremacist group, and the concept of "dorm'ing down" is somewhat distasteful to its members. They revel in their nova powers, so suppressing those powers goes against their nature. They can and do use the Dormancy Background, but it is not a pleasant experience. Those who use it too much may be accused of being "devots" or "zip-lovers." Storytellers, however, can use periods of dormancy to great effect by highlighting just what the character has gained by becoming a nova and a Terat.

Step Five: Finishing Touches

With the basics covered, you can now go back and spend your bonus points and calculate your Willpower. Quantum, Initiative and Movement totals as per the **Aberrant**. Try not to mini-max your character; use these bonus points to tighten the screws on your character's concept.

For Example: The 15 bonus points go rapidly. Lucien raises Dean's Willpower by 3 dots (6 points), then increases Cipher and Node Backgrounds by two (2 points each) and adds one dot of Contacts (1 point). Finally he brings his Stealth to four (2 points) and takes the specialties Hide in Shadows and Trail for that Ability (1 point each). This completes Dean's baseline stage, and Lucien is ready to bring him over.

A Monster Born

You've laid down your character's concept and baseline self; time to decide what makes him tick as a nova.

Step One: Eruption

More so than for other novas, a Terat's baseline coil is only a foundation, a shell that eruption tears apart. Your character's eruption should color not only how she manifests his powers and quantum abilities but also how he ended up in the arms of the Teragen. Don't just ask how your character erupted; ask why.

At this stage, also consider your character's Archetype. What path does he follow toward evolutionary perfection? Is he a Marvel, Monster or Portent? Creative players will tie their Archetype to both their eruption and their character's Nature.

For Example: Taking a moment to think, Lucien plays up Dean's desperation and loneliness when describing his eruption. In a misguided attempt to "be someone" Dean took a suicidal leap from an office tower. However, as Dean plummeted to his death, the eruption saved his life and showed him the path he must follow.

For his Archetype, Lucien chooses Monster. Dean is not a nice or well-adjusted nova. A loner as a baseline, Dean now snoops around, a nova voyeur. He uncovers people's deepest secrets and then uses those secrets to blackmail or torture them — making his victims feel like the rejects and freaks instead of him.

Step Two: Nova Points

Using your character's eruption and Archetype, you can now tailor how she manifests his quantum powers and abilities. How a character's quantum potential surfaces is important to the Teragen, as these powers become the outward manifestation of the fact that the nova is not only more than human, but Terat as well.

Many Terats avoid or escape from Rashoud facilities, making them individuals among individuals. When deciding how to spend your nova points, try to visualize your character's powers first, then apply the Mega-Attributes or quantum powers that most closely resemble your vision. Do not use the powers listed in *Aberrant* or in this book as a shopping list; doing so only leaves you with a cardboard cutout.

For Example: Lucien decides that the common theme to his powers is shadows. While a baseline Dean was a nobody, a human shade ignored by others. When Dean jumped and erupted in mid-fall, he landed in a shadow, becoming one with the nebulous substance and saving his life. In a flash of inspiration, Lucien comes up with the name Eclipse as Dean's nova handle. With this in mind, Lucien sets out to spend his nova points.



First on the list is upping Dean's Quantum to 3 (10 points). Tying in Dean's eruption and the motif of shadows, Lucien takes *Bodymorph* (Shadow) at 5 dots (13 nova points, buying two dots as tainted). Talking with his Storyteller, both assign Eclipse's *Bodymorph* dots as follows, using *Elemental Anima* as a guide: 1 to *Density Control* (Decrease), 1 to *Enhance/Diminish*, 1 to *Movement*, 1 to *Invisibility* while in shadows, and 1 to *Armor* for protection. Next up, Lucien buys 2 dots in *Hypnosis* (2 points) and one dot in *Mega-Appearance* with the *Mr. Nobody* enhancement (3 points). With the last two points he buys 10 dots worth of *Back-grounds* to complete Eclipse's shady tendencies. He adds one to *Cipher* for a total of 5; there is no way anyone can find Eclipse if he doesn't want them to. Lucien bumps *Contacts* to 4 and buys *Dormancy* at 4. He allocates the last two dots to *Influence* — he has secrets on a few well-to-do people and is not afraid to pull their strings.

Personalizing Abilities

Novas, and Terats most especially, are individuals. Their quantum abilities reflect their personalities and their studies of quantum evolution. It's important then, that these abilities not seem generic. Unfortunately, two fire-wielding characters with *Elemental Mastery: Blast* are still likely to have the same effect. Two characters with *Weather Manipulation: Lightning Bolt* run into a similar problem.

When personalizing powers, always remember that quantum is a fluid medium; it takes form because of the human mind. Novas control the expression of their powers, and the anima, an individual's quantum signature, is a perfect example of this. Novas can manifest wings of energy, form telekinetic limbs or protect themselves in glowing armor. Which one actually manifests depends on the nova's psychology, not a specific power type. Everything about quantum manifestation relates to an individual's subconscious.

To make powers unique, you have to go beyond reading the list of abilities and simply choosing whatever sounds "neat." You need to choose a power framework or theme that compliments overall characterization. Without a strong character concept guiding your choices, the roleplaying experience suffers. Careful consideration about how and why certain powers work allows you to explore your character on deeper levels and build a logical progression for character evolution. It is all a matter of understanding the character, knowing the set of emotional circumstances that trigger the eruption and delving into potential psychological influences that will affect quantum manifestation.

Step Three: Finishing Touches and Spark of Life

With the character mostly done, all there is left to do is calculate Taint, take aberrations and flesh out the character's background. With Terat characters, the question of aberrations will crop up more frequently, but at this point, it is best if your Storyteller decides your character's beginning aberrations.

For Example: Looking at Eclipse, Lucien tabulates starting Taint. With Node at 4 and two dots of Tainted powers, Eclipse's starting Taint is 4. Lucien's Storyteller takes a look at Dean and decides that Eclipse suffers from a low-level aberration: His mere presence lowers the ambient light of a room just enough to be noticeable (an inversion of *Glow*). Finally, Lucien takes a moment to answer questions about his character and, more importantly, about how to integrate Dean into the cell.

Playing Elevated Novas

The characters in most Teragen series should be unelevated novas, Terats who have yet to undergo a *Chrysalis*. These are characters of the same experience and power level as normal characters in *Aberrant*. There are times, however, when you want to play characters who have already evolved. This is only appropriate in a one-off story or if you want to play a high-power series.

Generate second stage characters (who have gone through the *Chrysalis* once) in the standard way, except for the following modifications:

- Characters have 50 nova points to spend instead of 30.
- Characters start with a base of 3 Taint and gain additional points for buying tainted Traits or Backgrounds that cause Taint.
- Characters have two free dots in the *Influence* Background (in the Teragen).
- Characters start with a base of four aberrations: two low-level and two mid-level. The player and Storyteller should choose the aberrations together. If characters gain additional points of Taint, they gain additional aberrations.
- Characters start with a +2 difficulty to social interaction with baselines. If they gain additional points of Taint, the penalty rises.

Elevated Terats are likely to be very prominent in the movement, and it is perfectly feasible for them to be faction leaders and sit on the Pantheon. In this case, make sure characters have *Backing* 5. They should probably have *Alies*, *Contacts* and *Followers* as well.

Note that in games of this sort, all player characters should start at the same stage of elevation.

APPENDIX: SAMPLE CHARACTERS

Terats are a varied lot. The following three characters only touch on a few of the possibilities for novas in a Teragen series. They each represent one of the Archetypes of the Teras philosophy and are ready to use as player or Storyteller characters. They also are already tied into the Teragen in general and the Blackburn Hotel enclave in particular, and one is currently spying on the movement for Sophia Rousseau and the Aberrants. Feel free to alter these details, but they can provide you and the Storyteller with valuable story hooks.

Dashing Revolutionary

Jesus Morales was just another soul in a sea of millions, destined to live, die and be forgotten in the modern-day Babylon of *el D.F.* — Mexico City. Born into Mexico's rapidly growing faceless middle-class, Jesus struggled to find himself in the Nova Age. Everywhere he looked Mexico was changing, Utopia's hand transforming *el D.F.* into a cosmopolitan metropolis and erasing decades of pollution, crime and poverty. Something did not ring true to Morales, but he carried on, every day the same as the last: waking at dawn, battling traffic for hours, filing reports in his tiny cubicle in a government building not far from the *Zócalo*, only to face traffic again before getting home to his family. Then everything changed.

As he sat in traffic, bottlenecked along the great artery of la Avenida de los Insurgentes, reality came crashing down. Surrounded by countless souls like himself, in the shadow of Utopia's billboards, Jesus felt the country's heroes — Hidalgo, Juarez and Villa — call to him. Aztec murals taunted him, hinting at his destiny. In a flash of realization and pain, drowned out by the din of traffic and the exasperation of thousands of souls around him,

Jesus erupted. He realized that his people needed to believe once more, to look beyond the present and see the potential each and every one of them possessed. Jesus got out of his car and walked away a nova.

Utopia eventually found Jesus, and after a stint at the local Rashoud facility, he was taught how to use his powers, how to become a "productive" citizen. Embracing his destiny and calling himself Matador, Jesus helped Utopia stabilize things in Mexico. He became a local — and soon national — icon, and the Project offered him membership in Team Tomorrow. Jesus refused, preferring to be a hero of the people. And yet, he was never able to silence his doubts about Utopia.

By 2007, Jesus came to understand that the Project was no better than Cortés or American corporations after NAFTA. Utopia only propagated the cycle that began with the Spanish and continued with the *hacendados* and the *gringos* — the subjugation of the proud Mexican nation with the poison of capitalism, "progress" and decadence. In 2008, Matador defected, leaving Utopia for the outlying provinces and joining a small revolutionary movement led by the enigmatic Terat Feathered Serpent.

The Teragen taught Matador the truth, and while Jesus had reservations about the movement's supremacist agenda, he realized they worked toward a noble goal: the destruction of Project Utopia. Matador drifted, first to the Primacy, attracted by Shrapnel and other revolutionaries, and eventually, to Nova Vigilance. Matador still has close ties with his mentor, Feathered Serpent, and both novas dream of the day they can free Mexico and return their nation to its roots — ushering in an Aztec revival.

Unfortunately, both Terats differ in their approach. This has forced Feathered Serpent to engineer events to draw Matador out of Mexico for a while, allowing the old Terat to solidify his hold over the country. The



Nova Detective

Homicide cops all have one case that stays with them, a murder so brutal, incomprehensible or shocking that it scars their psyches for life. For NYPD Detective Bridgett Caulder, that case was a multiple homicide in late 2007. A small two-room apartment had become a surreal slaughterhouse, with eight people fused together in a macabre portrait painted by a nova named Hector Guzman. Several of the victims were members of Guzman's own family.

Project Utopia swept onto the scene before Caulder could even finish her first report, but she couldn't let it go. She kept copies of the crime scene photos, called in markers across the department and carried on a personal investigation. She had seen proof of utter inhumanity, and her soul screamed for understanding. A clash with Utopia investigators led to reprimands, suspension and, eventually, to the loss of her shield. Nothing mattered by that point but peace of mind.

Her obsession led her to ever-darker corners of New York's nova underground, until she found evidence that Hector Guzman was still in town. With dogged determination and help from her few remaining police contacts, Caulder found the tendrils of the Teragen and followed them until she was closing in on Guzman, or "Lash" as he now called himself. Caulder never suspected that Guzman was luring her in, hoping to liberate the detective's mind through excruciating transformations like those he had bestowed upon his family.

One night in March of 2008, Caulder and Lash came face to face in the Blackburn Hotel, an edgy, often violent nova club in Harlem. Lash's twisted features contorted with glee as he began to reshape the baseline detective. Caulder's need to make sense of this monstrosity overrode her pain, however, and her mind lashed out with one powerful, shrieking "Why?" With that, she erupted and Lash's mind opened like a nightmarish

book. Torturous images of sadistic rapture flooded her agonized mind. Most horrific of all, however, was that Caulder saw her obsession with understanding reflected in this monstrous psyche. She lashed out with her pain and anger, and the two collapsed in agony, Lash from her psychic assault and Caulder from the pain of her eruption and the ensuing realization.

The Terats who make their home in the Blackburn have taken Caulder in, and she is continuing on her quest to understand. Her search is now focused on her own nature as a nova. She has begun to learn the philosophy of Teras, while making a position for herself in the enclave as a detective and troubleshooter for novas. Her telepathic abilities also help the Teragen spot spies among visitors to the enclave's public façade.

Caulder has been successful enough to attract attention from more prominent Terats. On a recent visit to New York, Count Orzaiz dined with Caulder, and the two talked long into the night. The Teragen rumor mill claims she became a Casablanca that night, although Caulder herself hasn't said a word.

Image: Caulder is an attractive African-American woman in her early 30s. Despite her eruption and expulsion from the force, she still wears the homicide detective dress code of fine suits and impeccable accessories. When operating on the street, she wears whatever clothes are most appropriate, often a casual combination of jeans, a T-shirt and a jacket to conceal her firearm.

Roleplaying Hints: You are new to this whole Teragen business, and part of you still thinks of yourself as one of New York's finest. But you know you're well beyond the pale now. A gray lump of matter in your brain makes you inhuman, and you need to understand just what that means. If you ignore the macho morons and the occasional psycho, the Teragen at least seems able to help you understand. Certainly more than the Utopia party line ever could.

Gear: Glock semi-automatic pistol, lock picks, flashlight, fingerprint kit



Tragic Monstrosity

Despite the piercing migraine that accompanies them, most eruptions are a cause for celebration. They usher in the promise of a new life, offering, among other things, resistance to most diseases, enviable powers and a finely tuned body seemingly purchased to perfection... most of the time.

Rules have exceptions, and Giuseppe Bennatti was born to be one. His eruption found him near death; chemotherapy had left him weak and Kojak bald, and his brain tumor rivaled his gray matter in mass. Eruption should have saved him from a horrible fate, but instead, it aggravated his condition. The cancer cells reacted to the MR-Node's quantum surge, spreading down his spine to afflict his entire body like a virulent waterfall. Giuseppe realized something was wrong when a grayish sludge seeped out from his ears and his attempts to wipe it away produced horrible agony.

The quantum-fueled cancer spread to every organ, bone, connective tissue and muscle in his body, except his skin. He realized his bones were disintegrating when his eyes slipped inside his skull. He felt his intestines slide down the interior of his right thigh and his biceps and triceps fall loose, pooling inside his hand and forearm. Still, Giuseppe remained alive. A force field surrounded his body, preventing any seepage of his vital visceral soup. He used plastic skeletons and eventually stainless steel pipes and tubes to supplant bone fragments, but to no avail. His cancer was now a living organism that fed off anything it touched.

As living proof of a worst-case scenario, Utopia could not allow Giuseppe to live. They lured him into a Rashoud facility with promises of a cure, then bagged him for termination in Bahrain. Giuseppe's only bout of good luck came when the Utopia transport pilot realized the truth behind the facility and escaped with his passengers. Although the plane crashed, Sloppy Joe (as his handlers cruelly referred to Giuseppe), the pilot and two other novas survived that fateful day.

Since the crash, Sloppy Joe has sought out and befriended Geryon. He has established himself as a Terat and found a home of sorts at the Blackburn Hotel enclave in New York City. Although he remains an enthusiastic Terat, the promises of a cure still haunt him. This is his Holy Grail and his greatest weakness. Already Sophia Rousseau of the Aberrants has exploited this vulnerability. She bandies about hints of a remedy, knowing Sloppy Joe will follow them like a cartoon rat smelling cheese. Sophia uses this edge to gain information about the Teragen. Sloppy Joe can either be the bridge to bring both groups together or the instrument of further hostility.

Image: Giuseppe's bone structure is all but gone. His outer skin is a haggis flesh-sac holding in a soup of loose internal organs, blood, muscles and bone fragments. Giuseppe's exoskeletal force field maintains a roughly human shape against which his thin, trans-

lucent skin plasters itself. He uses pipes and rods (which he must frequently replace) to emulate a crude skeleton around which he can wrap his internal organs and muscle tissue. The remainder of his internal viscera floats within the field, for all to see.

Roleplaying Hints:

Nobody knows how you

feel or wants to know either. You may work with the

Teragen, but you know

they find you disgusting. Living

as a pile of warm goo is enough to distance you from most people, so

you do them a favor and strike first with hostility. You act like you look because it's easier to think that you're in control of social encounters; you use flippant remarks and constant reminders about your putrid state to keep everyone at bay; you revel in your acidic powers because you have no choice. You can't be a hero, and you can never be loved. This is not morose whining, it's the damn truth! There is no happy ending, where the right woman will see you for who you really are and love you for your soul. Your dick is floating at the top of your organic stew... try not retching at that thought!

Gear: None. You don't want anything obstructing people's view of you in all your disgusting glory.



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ABERRANTTM

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